

Y 1.1/2:SERIAL 14647

United States Congressional Ser

Government
Documents

PROCEEDINGS
of the
100TH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES
[SUMMARY OF MINUTES]

Kansas City, Missouri

August 15-20, 1999

**MAY 18, 2000.—Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and
ordered to be printed**

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

U.S. CODE, TITLE 44, SECTION 1332

NATIONAL ENCAMPMENTS OF VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS; PROCEEDINGS
PRINTED ANNUALLY FOR CONGRESS

The proceedings of the national encampments of the United Spanish War Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the American Legion, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Veterans of World War I of the United States, Incorporated, the Disabled American Veterans, and the AMVETS (American Veterans of World War II), respectively, shall be printed annually, with accompanying illustrations, as separate House documents of the session of the Congress to which they may be submitted.

[Approved October 2, 1968.]

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

December, 1999

Honorable Dennis Hastert,
The Speaker U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: In conformance with the provisions of Public Law No. 620, 90th Congress, approved October 22, 1968, I am transmitting to you herewith the proceedings of the 100th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Kansas City, Missouri August 15-20, 1999, which is submitted for printing as a House document.

Sincerely,



JOHN J. SENK, JR.
Adjutant General

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE

SUNDAY, AUGUST 15, 1999

PAGE

Advance of Colors - - - - -	-1
Invocation - - - - -	-1
National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance - - - - -	-2
In Memoriam - - - - -	-2
Introduction of Memorial Speaker - - - - -	-2
Memorial Address - - - - -	-3
Benediction - - - - -	-7
Retiring of Colors - - - - -	-7

SUNDAY EVENING GALA

AUGUST 15, 1999

Invocation - - - - -	-8
Pledge of Allegiance - - - - -	-8
Introductions - - - - -	-8
Introduction of Bob Hope Tape - - - - -	-10
Introduction of Commander-in-Chief - - - - -	-10
Remarks by Commander-in-Chief Pouliot - - - - -	-11
Benediction - - - - -	-12

JOINT OPENING SESSION

MONDAY, AUGUST 16, 1999

Introduction of Past Commanders-in-Chief - - - - -	-13
Call to Order - - - - -	-15
Advancement of Colors - - - - -	-15
Invocation - - - - -	-15
Video Presentation - - - - -	-15
Introduction of Commander-in-Chief - - - - -	-16
Remarks by Commander-in-Chief Pouliot - - - - -	-16
Introduction - The Honorable Kay Waldo Barnes, Mayor of Kansas City - - - - -	-18
Greetings - The Honorable Kay Barnes, Mayor of Kansas City - - - - -	-18
Introduction of the Honorable Mel Carnahan, Governor of Missouri - - - - -	-19
Greetings - The Honorable Mel Carnahan - - - - -	-19
Presentation of American Flag Sets - - - - -	-21

Presentation of Awards to 1999 All American
Department Commanders by
Commander-in-Chief Pouliot -----23
Presentation of "Consecutive Years of
Membership" Citation to the Department
of Arizona -----24
Presentation of Certificate of Appreciation
to the 99th National Convention Committee -----25
Introduction of Colonel James R. Fisher
Director of Operations, Korean War
Commemoration Committee. -----25
Remarks by Lieutenant Colonel Fische -----26
Presentation of VFW Gold Medal of Merit and
Citation to Ladies Auxiliary President
Jane Bingham -----27
Response - Ladies Auxiliary President
Jane Bingham -----27
Introduction of the Honorable Einar V.
Dyhrkopp, Chairman, Board of Governors
of the United States Postal Service -----28
Remarks - The Honorable Einar V. Dyhrkopp -----28
Introduction of MOC Commander Marty
Ellingwood -----29
Remarks - MOC Commander Marty Ellingwood -----30
Introduction of Melody Waring, 1999 National
Youth Essay Winner -----31
Youth Essay Contest Winner - Melody Waring -----31
Introduction of Heidi Holley - Voice of
Democracy Winner -----32
Voice of Democracy Winner - Heidi Holley -----33
Presentation of VFW Americanism Award,
Gold Medal and Citation to the Honorable
Marcy Kaptur -----35
Response - The Honorable Marcy Kaptur -----35
Introduction of President William "Bill"
Clinton -----39
Keynote Speaker - The Honorable Bill Clinton,
President of the United States -----39
Closing Ceremonies -----47
RECESS -----47

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION

TUESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 17, 1999

Call to Order -----48
Invocation -----48

Salute to the Colors and Pledge of Allegiance	-48
Report of Credentials Committee	-48
Report of Committee on Convention Rules	-48
Report of the Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual	-53
Presentation of VFW James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award, Gold Medal and Citation to Pfizer Pharmaceutical Company	-61
Response - William E. Pelton	-62
Introduction of the Honorable Christopher Bond, U.S. Senate	-65
Remarks - Senator Christopher Bond	-65
Report of Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual (Cont'd.)	-69
Introduction of the Honorable Togo D. West, Jr., Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Department of Veterans Affairs	-76
Remarks by Secretary Togo D. West, Jr., Department of Veterans Affairs	-77
Report of Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual (Cont'd.)	-81
Presentation of Special Award to Commander- in-Chief Pouliot by the VFW Political Action Committee	-83
Introduction - General Lee Cheng-Lin	-84
Response - General Lee Cheng-lin	-84
Introduction of General Hong-Rae Kim, Vice- President, Korean Veterans Association	-86
Remarks by General Hong-Rae Kim, Korean Veterans Association	-86
Introduction of Prosper J.G.A. Ego, Chairman, OAL	-87
Remarks by Prosper J.G.A. Ego, Chairman of the Legion of Ex-Servicemen of the Netherlands	-88
Introduction of George Foreman	-90
Remarks by Mr. George Foreman	-90
Presentation of VFW Armed Forces Award, Gold Medal and Citation to Lieutenant General Ronald Blanck	-92
Response - Lieutenant General Ronald Blanck	-93
Report of Committee on Finance and Internal Organization	-94
Report of Committee on General Resolutions.	-105
Insurance Drawings	-108
Benediction	-109
RECESS	-109

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION

WEDNESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 18, 1999

Call to Order	-110
Opening Prayer	-110
Salute to the Colors	110
Report of Credentials Committee	-110
Report of Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs	-110
Report of Subcommittee on POW-MIA	-114
Presentation to Ralph Charles Kahle, Jr. Family	-116
Response - Past Commander-in-Chief Walter Hogan.	-117
Introduction of March of Dimes Representative Gary Collins	-117
Presentation to the VFW by the March of Dimes	117
Introduction of Mr. Dino DeConcini, Executive Director, Savings Bonds Marketing Office, Department of the Treasury	-120
Remarks - Mr. Dino DeConcini	120
Report of Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions	122
Introduction of the Honorable John McCain, United States Senator	-130
Remarks by Senator John McCain	-131
Introduction of Jim Nicholson, Chairman of Republican National Committee	-138
Remarks by Mr. Jim Nicholson,	-139
Presentation of VFW News Media Award, Gold Medal and Citation to William E. Butterworth (W.E.B. Griffin)	-142
Remarks by Mr. William Butterworth	-143
Presentation of the VFW Hall of Fame Award, Gold Medal and Citation to Mr. Derrick Thomas	-144
Remarks by Mr. Derrick Thomas	-145
Report of Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions (Cont'd.)	146
Introduction of Brigadier General Wilma Vaught, Women in Military Service for American Memorial Foundation	-155
Remarks by Brigadier General Wilma Vaught, USAF (Ret.)	-155
Insurance Winners	-157
Benediction	157
RECESS	-157

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION

THURSDAY MORNING, AUGUST 19, 1999

Call to Order	-158
Opening Prayer	-158
Salute to the Colors	-158
Pledge of Allegiance	-158
Report of Credentials Committee	158
Introduction of Helen Putnam Blackwell	-158
Introduction of Colonel Rufus L. Forrest, Jr., Commander, 190th Air Refueling Wing	-160
Presentation by Colonel Rufus Forrest	160
Introduction of Comrade James Chancellor	-161
Presentation by Comrade James Chancellor	-161
Presentation of VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation to Past Commander-in-Chief John Moon	163
Response - Past Commander-in-Chief John E. Moon	-164
Introduction of Comrade Ray Sisk	165
Response - Comrade Ray Sisk	-165
Presentation of the James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award to Gregory V. White	166
Response by Mr. Gregory V. White	-167
Presentation of National Large Employer of the Year Award to ITT Federal Services Corporation	-167
Response - Mr. Sterling Richardson	-168
Presentation of National Small Employer of the Year Award to Raytheon Aerospace Company	168
Response - Mr. Charles Boster	-169
Presentation of National Local Office of the Public Employment Service Award	-169
Response - Mr. Glenn McQueen	-170
Presentation of Outstanding VA Health-Care Provider of the Year Award to Mrs. Vicki Lawrence	171
Response - Mrs. Vicki Lawrence	-172
Presentation of Outstanding Community Health-Care Provider of the Year Award to Mr. James Tzivanis	-172
Response - Mr. James Tzivanis	173
Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award to Mr. Elijah Jethro	-173
Response - Mr. Elijah Jethro	-174
Presentation of VFW J. Edgar Hoover Award, Gold Medal and Citation to Corporal Gregory A. Travland.	174
Response - Mr. Gregory Travland	-175

Presentation of VFW Emergency Services Award, Gold Medal and Citation to Lieutenant Keith E. Anderson	-176
Response - Lieutenant Keith Anderson	-177
Introduction of National Sergeants-at-Arms	-177
Presentation of VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation to National Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms Nicholas Polansky	-178
Response - Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms Polansky	-179
Announcement of Nominations for National Home Trustees	-179
Introduction of Past Commanders-in-Chief	-180
Presentation of VFW Gold Medal and Citation to Past Department of South Dakota Adjutant-Quartermaster William J. Radigan, Jr.	-180
Response - Comrade William Radigan	-181
Visit of National Home Representatives	-181
Remarks by 1999 Buddy Poppy Child	-186
Introduction of National President of the Ladies Auxiliary	-187
Remarks by Ladies Auxiliary President	-187
Presentation to the National Home	-189
Presentation of Wheelchair on Behalf of Invacare	-190
Introduction of National Officers	-190
Nomination of Officers	-193
Nomination of Commander-in-Chief	-193
Nomination of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	-195
Nomination of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	-198
Nomination of Quartermaster General	-199
Nomination of Surgeon General	-201
Nomination of Judge Advocate General	-203
Nomination of National Chaplain	-203
Report of Committee on General Resolutions (Cont'd.)	-204
Closing Ceremonies	-205
RECESS	-205

FOURTH BUSINESS SESSION

FRIDAY MORNING, AUGUST 20, 1999

Call to Order	-206
Salute to the Colors	-206
Pledge of Allegiance	-206
Opening Prayer.	-206
Final Report of Credentials Committee	-206
Completion of Convention Business	-207
Election of Officers	-207
Announcement of Council Members-Elect by Adjutant General	-210

Announcement of Appointments by
Commander-in-Chief-Elect -----211
Installation of Officers -----211
Presentation of Caps by Commander-in-Chief -----215
Remarks by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak -----216
Remarks by Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith -----217
Presentation of Past Commander-in-Chief
Lapel Pin and Gold Life Membership Card -----217
Remarks by Past Commander-in-Chief Pouliot -----217
Acceptance Address by Commander-in-Chief Smart -----218
Closing Ceremonies -----223
Closing Prayer. -----223
Adjournment -----223

COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

(Including societies that amalgamated to form Veterans of Foreign Wars)

The Veterans of Foreign Service and the Army of the Philippines amalgamated at Denver, CO, August 1913, forming the Veterans of Foreign Wars as it is today. However, the birth of the order dates from September 29, 1899, when the first national officers were elected and the eligibility clause adopted. The original chapter was granted October 11, 1899.

* indicates deceased

American Veterans of Foreign Service

1899-1900	James C. Putnam*	Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1900-1901	Maj. Will S. White*	Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1901-1902	Maj. Will S. White*	Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1902-1903	James Romanis*	Elected at Washington Courthouse, Ohio.
1903-1904	James Romanis*	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1904-1905	James Romanis*	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1905-1906	George Metzger*	Elected at Altoona, Pennsylvania.
1906-1907	Charles H. Devereaux*	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1907-1908	David T. Nevin*	Elected at James Exposition Grounds, Virginia.
1908-1909	J. Alfred Judge*	Elected at Lebanon, Pennsylvania.
1909-1910	J. Alfred Judge*	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
1910-1911	Robert J. Woodside*	Elected at Jersey City, New Jersey.
1911-1912	Robert J. Woodside*	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1912-1913	Robert J. Woodside*	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

American Veterans of Foreign Service (Eastern Branch)

1903-1904	Capt. Robert S. Hansburg *	Elected at Altoona, Pennsylvania.
1904-1905	H.O. Kelly *	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

(The above two organizations amalgamated September 1905, at Altoona, Pennsylvania.)

Army of the Philippines

1900-1901	Gen. Francis V. Greene *	Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1901-1902	Gen. Irving Hale *	Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah.
1902-1903	Gen. Irvin Hale *	Elected at Council Bluffs, Iowa.
1903-1904	Gen. Charles King *	Elected at St. Paul, Minnesota.
1904-1905	Gen. Wilder S. Metcalf *	Elected at St. Louis, Missouri.
1905-1906	Col. Alfred S. Frost *	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1906-1907	Gen. Arthur MacArthur *	Elected at Des Moines, Iowa.
1907-1908	Capt. H.A. Crow *	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
1908-1909	Maj. P.J.H. Farrell *	Elected at Galesburg, Illinois.
1909-1910	Col. Charles L. Jewett *	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
1910-1911	A.H. Anderson *.	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1911-1912	F. Warner Karling *	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1912-1913	F. Warner Karling *	Elected at Lincoln, Nebraska.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

1913-1914	Rice W. Means*	Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1914-1915	Thomas Crago *	Elected at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.
1915-1916	Gus Hartung*	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1916-1917	Albert Rabin*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1917-1918	William Ralston*	Elected at New York, New York.
1918-1919	F. Warner Karling*	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1919-1920	F. Warner Karling*	Elected at Providence, Rhode Island.
1920-1921	Robert G. Woodside*	Elected at Washington, D.C.
1921-1922	Robert G. Woodside*	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1922-1923	Tillinghast Huston*	Elected at Seattle, Washington.
1923-1924	Gen. Lloyd M. Brett*	Elected at Norfolk, Virginia.
1924-1925	John H. Dunn*	Elected at Atlantic City, New Jersey.
1925-1926	Fred Stover*	Elected at Tulsa, Oklahoma.
1926-1927	Theodore Stitt*	Elected at El Paso, Texas.
1927-1928	Frank T. Strayer*	Elected at Providence, Rhode Island.
1928-1929	Eugene P. Carver*	Elected at Indianapolis, Indiana.
1929-1930	Kezekiah N. Duff*	Elected at St. Paul, Minnesota.
1930-1931	Paul C. Wolman*	Elected at Baltimore, Maryland.
1931-1932	Darold D. DeCoe*	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
1932-1933	Adm. Robert E. Coontz*	Elected at Sacramento, California.
1933-1934	James E. Van Zandt*	Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
1934-1935	James E. Van Zandt*	Elected at Louisville, Kentucky.
1935-1936	James E. Van Zandt*	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1936-1937	Bernard W. Kearny*	Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1937-1938	Scott P. Squyres*	Elected at Buffalo, New York.
1938-1939	Eugene I. Van Antwerp*	Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1939-1940	Otis N. Brown*	Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1940-1941	Joseph C. Menendez*	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1941-1942	Max Singer*	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1942-1943	Robert T. Merrill*	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1943-1944	Carl S. Schoeninger*	Elected at New York, New York.
1944-1945	Jean A. Brunner*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1945-1946	Joseph M. Stack*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1946-1947	Louis E. Starr*	Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1947-1948	Ray H. Brannaman*	Elected at Cleveland, Ohio.
1948-1949	Lyall T. Beggs *	Elected at St. Louis, Missouri..
1949-1950	Clyde A. Lewis	Elected at Miami, Florida.
1950-1951	Charles C. Ralls*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1951-1952	Frank C. Hilton	Elected at New York, New York.
1952-1953	James W. Cothran*	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1953-1954	Wayne E. Richards*	Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
1954-1955	Merton B. Tice*	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1955-1956	Timothy J. Murphy*	Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1956-1957	Cooper T. Holt	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1957-1958	Richard L. Roudebush*	Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.
1958-1959	John W. Mahan	Elected at New York, New York.
1959-1960	Louis G. Feldmann*	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1960-1961	T.C. Connell	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1961-1962	Robert E. Hansen	Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.

1962-1963 . . Byron B. Gentry* Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
 1963-1964 . . Joseph J Lombardo* Elected at Seattle, Washinton.
 1964-1965 . . John A Jenkins* Elected at Cleveland, Ohio.
 1965-1966 . . Andy Borg* Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
 1966-1967 . . Leslie M. Fry* Elected at New York, New York.
 1967-1968 . . Joseph A. Scerra* Elected at New Olreans, Louisiana.
 1968-1969 . . Richard W. Homan Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
 1969-1970 . . Raymond A. Gallagher* Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
 1970-1971 . . Herbert R. Rainwater* Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.
 1971-1972 . . Joseph L. Vicites* Elected at Dallas, Texas.
 1972-1973 . . Patrick E. Carr* Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
 1973-1974 . . Ray R. Soden Elected at New Olreans, Louisiana.
 1974-1975 . . John J. Stang Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
 1975-1976 . . Thomas C. Walker Elected at Los Angeles, California.
 1976-1977 . . R.D. Smith Jr. Elected at New York, New York.
 1977-1978 . . Dr. John Wasylik Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
 1978-1979 . . Eric Sandstrom Elected at Dallas, Texas.
 1979-1980 . . Howard E. Vander Clute Jr.* . . . Elected at New Olreans, Louisiana.
 1980-1981 . . T.C. Selman* Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
 1980-1981 . . Arthur Fellwock Succeeded T.C. Selman, Oct. 21, 1980.
 1980-1981 . . Arthur Fellwock Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
 1982-1983 . . James R. Currieo Elected at Los Angeles, California.
 1983-1984 . . Clifford G. Olson Jr. Elected at New Olreans, Louisiana.
 1984-1985 . . Billy Ray Cameron Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
 1985-1986 . . John S. Staum Elected at Dallas, Texas.
 1986-1987 . . Norman G. Staab Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
 1987-1988 . . Earl L. Stock* Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
 1988-1989 . . Larry W. Rivers Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
 1989-1990 . . Walter G. Hogan Elected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
 1990-1991 . . James L. Kimery Elected at Baltimore, Maryland.
 1991-1992 . . Robert E. Wallace Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
 1992-1993 . . John M. Carney Elected at Indianapolis, Indiana.
 1993-1994 . . George R. Cramer Elected at Dallas, Texas.
 1994-1995 . . Allen F. "Gunner" Kent Elected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
 1995-1996 . . Paul A. Spera Elected at Phoenix, Arizona.
 1996-1997 . . James E. Nier Elected at Louisville, Kentucky.
 1997-1998 . . John E. Moon Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah.
 1998-1999 . . Thomas A. Pouliot Elected at San Antonio, Texas

VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 1998-1999

Commander-in-Chief	Thomas A. Pouliot
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	John W. Smart
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	John F. Gwizdak
Adjutant General	John J. Senk, Jr.
Quartermaster General	Joe L. Ridgley
Judge Advocate General	R. Earl Lord
Surgeon General	Kenneth S. Snow, Jr.
National Chaplain	Fr. Thomas W. Neville
National Chief of Staff	Randall E. Russell
Inspector General	Norbert K. Enos
Assistant Adjutant General & Executive Dir., Washington Office	Kenneth A. Steadman
Assistant Adjutant General, Administration	Lawrence LeFebvre
Assistant Adjutant General, Programs	W. Benny Bachand
Assistant Adjutant General, Marketing	Ronald G. Browning
Assistant Quartermaster General	Lawrence M. Maher
Director, Citizenship Education & Community Service	Michael J. Gormalley
Director, Emblem & Supply Department	M.L. "Bud" Cale
Director, Finance and Human Resources	Robert B. Greene
Director, General Services	David L. Swindler
Director, Life Membership & Dues Processing	Gary Housknecht
Director, Marketing Service	Kevin C. Jones
Director, Membership	Thomas L. Kissell
Director, Operations	Robert Crow
Director, Post Services & Buddy Poppy	James R. Rowoldt
Director, Publications & Editor, VFW Magazine	Richard K. Kolb
Director, VFW Foundation	Steve Van Buskirk
Director, VFW Properties	Billy R. Weissend
Director, Youth Development, Scholarship & Recognition	Gordon R. Thorson
Deputy Executive Director, Washington Office	Robert E. Wallace
Director, Action Corps & Deputy Director, National Legislative Service	Sidney Daniels
Director, Administrative Services - Washington	Edward L. "Leo" Andrew
Director, Communications and Public Affairs	William G. Smith
Director, Employment Service	James N. Magill
Director, National Legislative Service	Dennis Cullinan
Director, National Security & Foreign Affairs	Bruce R. Harder
National Service Officer & Director, National Veterans Service	Frederico Juarbe, Jr.
Administrative Assistant	Russell Cutrightt
Meeting & Events Coordinator	Vanessa Kane

REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS,
1998-99

DISTRICT 1	(ME, NH)	Robert W. Madigan
DISTRICT 2	(MA, VT)	Bradley F. Reynolds
DISTRICT 3	(MD, NJ)	Raymond J. Boyle
DISTRICT 4	(DC, DE, EU)	G. P. "Jerry" Miserandino, Sr.
DISTRICT 5	(IN, MO)	James R. Mueller
DISTRICT 6	(VA, WV)	Bobby Walls
DISTRICT 7	(TN, KY)	Leroy Ford
DISTRICT 8	(GA, AL)	Ray E. Brooks
DISTRICT 9	(SC, NC)	William J. Hendren
DISTRICT 10	(OK, AR)	Eugene H. George
DISTRICT 11	(WI, IA)	William P. Shannon
DISTRICT 12	(SD, ND, WY)	Richard J. Belling.
DISTRICT 13	(NE, KS)	Lewie B Cooper
DISTRICT 14	(MT, WA, ID)	George F. Riedel
DISTRICT 15	(NM, CO, AZ)	George H. Palmateer
DISTRICT 16	(LAT AM/CAR, PAC, AK, HI)	Thomas I. Elliot
DISTRICT 17	(UT, NV, OR)	Frank R. Risewick
DISTRICT 18	(CT, RI)	Ronald Rusakiewicz
DISTRICT 19	(LA, MS)	Richard J. Fruge
DISTRICT A	(Pennsylvania)	Charles R. Feltenberger
DISTRICT B	(Illinois)	Rick Frank
DISTRICT C	(New York)	T. William Bossidy
DISTRICT D	(Ohio)	Craig D. Swartz
DISTRICT E	(Minnesota)	Donald L. Gates, Jr.
DISTRICT F	(Michigan)	Richard L. Lehner
DISTRICT G	(California)	Richard R. Pignone
DISTRICT H	(Texas)	Alexander Vernon
DISTRICT J	(Florida)	James DePass
Past Commander-in-Chief		John E. Moon



Thomas A. Pouliot
Commander-in-Chief
1998-99



John W. Smart
Commander-in-Chief
1999-00

VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 1999-2000

Commander-in-Chief	John W. Smart
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	John F. Gwizdak
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	James N. Goldsmith
Adjutant General	John J. Senk, Jr.
Quartermaster General	Joe L. Ridgley
Judge Advocate General	Donald W. Watts
Surgeon General	Curtis O. Bohlman, MD
National Chaplain	Fred V. Vogler
National Chief of Staff	Arthur E. Koch, III
Inspector General	John J. Zuba, Sr.
Assistant Adjutant General & Executive Dir., Washington Office	Kenneth A. Steadman
Assistant Adjutant General, Administration	Lawrence LeFebvre
Assistant Adjutant General, Programs	W. Benny Bachand
Assistant Adjutant General, Marketing	Ronald G. Browning
Assistant Quartermaster General	Lawrence M. Maher
Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General - Operations ..	Robert Crow
Deputy Executive Director, Washington Office	Robert E. Wallace
Director, Buddy Poppy & Member Services	Thomas L. Kissell
Director, Citizenship Education & Community Service	Michael J. Gormalley
Director, Communications	Steve Van Buskirk
Director, Emblem & Supply Department	M.L. "Bud" Cale
Director, Finance and Human Resources	Robert B. Greene
Director, General Services	David L. Swindler
Director, Life Membership & Dues Processing	Robert A. Crider
Director, Marketing Service	Kevin C. Jones
Director, Membership	James R. Rowoldt
Director, Publications & Editor, VFW Magazine	Richard K. Kolb
Director, VFW Foundation	Wilburn "Bud" Meador, Jr.
Director, VFW Properties	Billy R. Weissend
Director, Youth Development, Scholarship & Recognition	Gordon R. Thorson
Director, Action Corps & Deputy Director, National Legislative Service	Sidney Daniels
Director, Administrative Services - Washington	Edward L. "Leo" Andrew
Director, Public Affairs - Washington	William G. Smith
Director, Employment Service	James N. Magill
Director, National Legislative Service	Dennis Cullinan
Director, National Security & Foreign Affairs	Bruce R. Harder
National Service Officer & Director, National Veterans Service	Frederico Juarbe, Jr.
Administrative Assistant	Russell Cutright
Meeting & Events Coordinator	Vanessa Kane

REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS,
1999-2000

DISTRICT 1	(ME, NH)	Donald W. Linscott, Jr.
DISTRICT 2	(MA, VT)	Bradley F. Reynolds
DISTRICT 3	(MD, NJ)	William A. Goode
DISTRICT 4	(DC, DE, EU)	G. P. "Jerry" Miserandino, Sr.
DISTRICT 5	(IN, MO)	Omar F. Kendall
DISTRICT 6	(VA, WV)	Bobby Walls
DISTRICT 7	(TN, KY)	John Furgess
DISTRICT 8	(GA, AL)	Ray E. Brooks
DISTRICT 9	(SC, NC)	William J. Jolin
DISTRICT 10	(OK, AR)	Eugene H. George
DISTRICT 11	(WI, IA)	Curt J. Taylor
DISTRICT 12	(SD, ND, WY)	Richard J. Belling
DISTRICT 13	(NE, KS)	Billy C. Smith
DISTRICT 14	(MT, WA, ID)	George F. Riedel
DISTRICT 15	(NM, CO, AZ)	Vincent J. Mitchell
DISTRICT 16	(LAT AM/CAR, PAC, AK, HI)	Thomas I. Elliott
DISTRICT 17	(UT, NV, OR)	Charles D. Fuller
DISTRICT 18	(CT, RI)	Ronald Rusakiewicz
DISTRICT 19	(LA, MS)	W. Hugh Long
DISTRICT A	(Pennsylvania)	Allen Q. Jones
DISTRICT B	(Illinois)	Clyde F. Davis, Jr.
DISTRICT C	(New York)	George S. Smith
DISTRICT D	(Ohio)	Craig D. Swartz
DISTRICT E	(Minnesota)	Donald L. Gates, Jr.
DISTRICT F	(Michigan)	Ernest E. Meyers, Sr.
DISTRICT G	(California)	Robert J. Maxwell
DISTRICT H	(Texas)	Alexander Vernon
DISTRICT J	(Florida)	Robert Sprute
Past Commander-in-Chief		Thomas A. Pouliot

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 100TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI
AUGUST 15 - 20, 1999

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE
SUNDAY, AUGUST 15, 1999

(The Memorial Service of the 100th Annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held at the Downtown Airport, Kansas City, Missouri, was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot, presiding. The Gold Star parents, Gold Star wives, National Officers and Past National Chaplains were escorted by the Sergeants-at-Arms.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Sergeant-at-Arms, you will prepare this gathering for the Advancement and the Posting of the Colors.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Yes, sir.

ADVANCE OF COLORS

(Whereupon, the VFW National Honor Guard advanced the Colors at this time.)

INVOCATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Please remain standing for the Invocation by the Reverend Harry Sims.

REVEREND HARRY SIMS: Let us bow our heads as we pray. Almighty God, we are grateful for life and the many blessings Thou has bestowed upon us. We thank Thee for the country in which we live and for the freedom that we have. We know, O God, that the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States have played a very important role in this. Therefore, we pray Thy special blessings upon them as they meet in this 100th Annual Convention.

It is wonderful to know that such an organization has been in existence for such a long period of time. We pray now for its leaders, who are very special people. We pray, too, O God, in this convention that they will accomplish the plans laid out for the organization to move forward in its work during the coming year.

May the leaders plan, present, challenge and lead for the good of all. We would ask Thy blessing, Our Heavenly Father, upon those who will be speaking and leading in this 100th Annual Memorial Service of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

We remember, too, the relatives of those who have passed on in

this past year, and pray, Our Heavenly Father, that Thy will touch their lives day-by-day. Give them the strength that they need and lift them up as they live their lives day-by-day. We will give Thee all of the praise and the glory as we serve Thee. For we ask this in Thy holy name. Amen.

NATIONAL ANTHEM AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, comrades and sisters, please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and the singing of the National Anthem.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was given followed by the singing of the National Anthem.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Commander-in-Chief, the Opening Ceremonies for today's Memorial Service have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We will now hear the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" by the St. Thomas More Celebration Choir.

(Whereupon, the St. Thomas More Celebration Choir sang the "Battle Hymn of the Republic.")

IN MEMORIAM

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much. Comrades and Sisters, Ladies of our Auxiliary and Friends: We have met at this time to commemorate our comrades of the United States Armed Forces who have answered the last call. The VFW Ritual provides that the audience shall refrain from applauding. The Chief of Staff will see that there is no disturbance during this ceremony.

I would like to acknowledge the presence of Mrs. Helen Merrill, widow of Past Commander-in-Chief Bob T. Merrill, who passed away on January 16, 1999.

I request that the National Chaplain preside.

(National Chaplain Thomas Neville presided during the Memorial Services performed by the National Officers in accordance with the Ritual.)

(At the conclusion of the Memorial Service, the St. Thomas More Celebration Choir led the assembly in singing "America.")

INTRODUCTION OF MEMORIAL SPEAKER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: At this time I am pleased to introduce a distinguished individual and a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars as our Memorial Service Speaker.

M. G. "Pat" Robertson is an internationally-renowned religious broadcaster. He is the founder of the Christian Broadcasting Network, which is among several other organizations and broadcasts entities he is affiliated with. CBN, the Flagship Program, the 700 Club, reaches an average of one million American viewers daily.

Mr. Robertson also is the co-chairman of International Family Entertainment and Chancellor of Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia. His Operation Blessing International Relief and Development Corporation has provided nearly \$500 million in humanitarian aid worldwide.

He is the author of many books. In 1992, Mr. Robertson was selected by Newsweek as one of America's 100th cultural elite. In 1955, he graduated from Yale University Law School. He earned a Master's Degree from New York Theological Seminary in 1959.

Two years later, he was ordained a Southern Baptist Minister in Norfolk, Virginia. He resigned his ordination in 1987, prior to announcing his candidacy for the U.S. presidency. After completing Navy ROTC during college, he took a commission in the Marine Corps.

In 1951, he served in Korea as a Second Lieutenant in the First Marine Division. He served as an Assistant Division Adjutant during the Korean War. He was awarded three Battle Stars and a Korean Presidential Unit Citation. He has been a Life Member of Post 8484 in Tennessee since 1991.

I am pleased to introduce Dr. Pat Robertson.

MEMORIAL ADDRESS

DR. PAT ROBERTSON: We gather together at this very solemn moment to commemorate the brave men and women who have given their lives in the service of freedom. I want to relate to you one story that is touching to my heart. It was set in Vietnam, but it could have just as easily have been set in the Argonne Forest, the beaches of Normandy, the Bulge and Bataan Heartbreak Ridge, Taiwan, Iwo Jima, Okinawa or many of the other places of battle where brave men have fallen in the service of their country.

It seems that a unit of the 101st Airborne was pinned down by hostile enemy fire and one young member of their unit had fallen, wounded, perhaps mortally wounded in between the U.S. lines and the lines of the enemy. The lieutenant in charge of his platoon ordered his men to stay under cover because he knew that to go out in that withering fire would merely risk the safety of the rest of his men.

Despite the order, a brave corpsman, ignoring the battle hazard, raced forward and laid down beside the wounded soldier. As he attempted to bring him back into the lines for safety, he was cut down by that fire and was killed. He disobeyed the order of his lieutenant, but a grateful nation ordered him the Congressional Medal of Honor for Heroism.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am reminded of the remarks of Ronald Reagan on the 40th Anniversary of the Normandy Invasion of D-Day as he surveyed the men who had thrown their bodies on the beaches of Normandy with the hope of reclaiming a continent.

He said these words, "You are a timeless inspiration to all who are

free and to all who would be free.” I stood with the Vietnam veterans, although I was a veteran of the Korean War and served in the Korean War north of the 38th parallel with the First Marine Division.

I saw these men from the Vietnamese conflict point out the names of some of their comrades and relate to me instances of the bravery, of the courage that had identified these men whom they loved and honored through their service. But as I stand before you today, and I was thinking how can we commemorate the memory of these brave individuals?

I am reminded of the words of our great President Abraham Lincoln who stood on a battlefield in Gettysburg, and he said, “This was an experiment conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” We weren’t sure in those days whether this experiment in liberty would survive.

But because of the bravery of those who fought, he said, “I can’t hallow their ground, I can’t consecrate this ground. The blood of the men who died here consecrated it and all we can do is to acknowledge their sacrifice.”

As I think today of these who have died, and I know their loved ones are here who have lost a husband or a son, or a father or a mother in combat, I say how can we today build a fit memorial to those who have shed their lives for their country?

When I was young and growing up, I was thrilled at the exploits of the United States armed forces in Europe and in the Pacific. We stopped the Nazi war machine, something that would have, according to the words of Winston Churchill, “Destroyed Christian civilization.”

We died for liberty to keep you free, to keep Asia free and to keep America free. Ladies and gentlemen, when we went into World War I and we went into World War II, we went in to win. I am reminded of the words of the great General Douglas MacArthur, whom I served under in the Far East, who said, “In war there is no substitute for victory.”

When I was in Korea, I saw a brilliant movement by MacArthur at In-ch’un, China, and then a lightning strike into North Korea, which easily could have defeated the enemy and taken the entire Korean Peninsula and liberated it for freedom. But those in Washington decided against that. They decided on compromise.

They didn’t go for victory, they went for a half win, which liberated South Korea but left the North in the grip of a vicious Communist dictatorship which right now, ladies and gentlemen, is imperiling the United State of America, Japan and Asia with thermonuclear weapons.

They have already sent a missile over Japan and threatening to do more. They have devastated the lives of their people, because the United States determined that it wouldn’t fight to win.

With that in mind, I couldn’t believe what was happening in Vietnam. We lost 45,000 to 50,000 of our precious young men and we squandered \$150 million of our treasury, and when it was all over we left in defeat. Why? Because those in charge said we will not bomb Hanoi,

we will not bomb the dikes on the Red River, we will not bomb the Harbor, we will give privileged sanctuary to the Vietcong to run their supplies down through Cambodia and Laos. We, as a people, said we will not fight to win.

Ladies and gentlemen, if that was not enough, we fought a war in the Gulf. It was a brilliant strategic move. General Schwarzkopf is one of the great generals. Our forces moved flawlessly against the forces of Saddam Hussein. But after 100 hours, the people in Washington said, "Wouldn't that make a marvelous headline in the newspaper if we won a war in 100 hours?"

So we let the Republic Guard down in Bosnia, we leave Saddam Hussein in power in Baghdad, and now he threatens the Middle East and possibly us with chemical, biological and possibly nuclear weapons. We didn't go in to win. Now, I submit to you today if we are going to build a fit tribute to those of our comrades who have fallen in battle, couldn't we do this as a nation to declare once and for all we will not as a nation play games at war with the precious lives of our American people? We will only go in to win.

What other memorial could we build for them? Well, one comes to mind very quickly. I stood proudly with you today and placed my hand on my heart, and others of you in uniform saluted as the flag came. Then we sang what is called the banner, the Star Spangled Banner, the National Anthem of the United States.

I would like to make one tribute and one memorial to these who died in battle. We will, the United States of America, pass a Constitutional Amendment that says that flag shall not be desecrated by those who hate this country. What else will we give to them? Why did they fight? Why did they die?

Many of them died for a sense of duty. Many did it because they were ordered in the battle. But why? What can we do? I would like to suggest a few other things. The first thing I think we should do to these people is ensure that the leaders of this great nation are honorable people, men and women who tell the truth.

The second thing that I believe we should do for them is to ensure that there will be no more Columbine High Schools. We need to guarantee for the children and the grandchildren of these who have fallen in battle that they will be able to see their children and grandchildren educated in quality schools with a drug-free, crime-free environment.

Another memorial that I would like to make to these brave men is to ensure that this nation, this great rich nation of ours, is a nation that cares for its children and trains them to be honest, God-fearing citizens. In that regard, I believe no more fit memorial would be than to see once again the children of America are able to acknowledge God and pray in the public schools of America.

I believe, as we have said so eloquently, the chaplain and others, we have a Pledge of Allegiance, one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all. We have on our coins "In God We Trust." Can't we give as

a memorial to these who have fallen in battle the absolute guarantee that once and for all as we go into another century and another millennium that this great nation will indeed be a city set on a hill, a shining example of freedom for the rest of the world and truly one nation under God?

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that we need as a nation to make a commitment. Although we will not play games in war, war is not for play, war is for victory and war is for freedom. But we will be ever ready as a nation to sacrifice whatever it takes as a nation to guarantee that our freedoms and the freedoms of our children and grandchildren are preserved.

Finally, we want to say to these brave warriors, who have fallen in battle, and we want to say it from a pure heart, we kept the faith. As the Apostle Paul said, "I have run my race, I have kept the faith. Hereafter is a crown laid up for me for those who love the Lord."

May not it be just our words in a memorial service that we go away and soon forget, but may it be our deeds as a people that says we are not going to forget and we will build lasting structures and lasting institutions that will guarantee liberty and will hold forth the memory of your sacrifice for all times.

We will build for you and for the future generations of America a living memorial of your bravery and your sacrifice. Finally, this is Sunday, and as was said in the service earlier, the captain of our faith was one example that has touched the lives of more than the conquerors of all the heroes and all the military men of history.

He never commanded an army, he never ruled a country, and yet more people give him acknowledgement than any person who has ever lived in all of history. The reason is he was willing to die, not just for one country, not just for one state, not just for one city, he was willing to die for all mankind.

His example is an example of sacrifice for all of us, because he said, "I didn't come to be served but to serve and give my life a ransom for all people." The good news is that he didn't just die at the hands of cruel men, but he rose from the dead. That's the hope that we all have.

We don't come to grieve, we come to celebrate. Indeed, there is a resurrection, indeed there is another life. Indeed, there is something beyond this flesh and there is something beyond what we see with our eyes. There is a world of the spirit and a world that goes on forever.

Ladies and gentlemen, to that we celebrate the ultimate and supreme sacrifice, the example of us all, of someone who was willing to hang on the cross and die for you and me so that we might be free. He said, "If the son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

So today we commemorate those who died for our freedom. We say from the bottom of our hearts thank you and may God bless you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much, Dr. Robertson, for those words.

We will have the St. Thomas More Celebration Choir singing "An

American Hymn" and "I Hear Liberty Singing."

(Whereupon, the St. Thomas More Celebration Choir sang "An American Hymn" and "I Hear Liberty Singing.")

BENEDICTION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Ladies and Gentlemen, please stand for the Benediction by Reverend Patrick Rush, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Kansas City/St. Joseph, Missouri.

REVEREND PATRICK RUSH: Blessed are those that die in the Lord. Let them rest from their labors for their good deeds go with them. Let us pray.

Father of mercies and God of all consolation, you pursue us with untiring love and dispel the shadow of death with the bright dawn of life. Hear our prayers for your servants, our honored dead, our veterans of America's foreign wars whom you have summoned out of this world.

Forgive them their sins and failings. Grant them everlastingly the peace for which they once fought and let them pass unharmed through the gates of death to dwell with the blessed in light. Your son, our Lord Jesus Christ, by dying has destroyed our death and by rising has restored our life.

Enable us, therefore, their families to press on toward Christ so that after our earthly course has run he may reunite us with those whom we share this day. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: At this time we have three flyovers planned, one beginning at 10:00, one at 10:05 and one at 10:10. The first one will be a flyover by F-15's. The second one will be a flyover by B-38's and the last one will be T-38's.

You may be seated and watch the flyovers. The first will be the F-15's flyover. The Air Force honors the Veterans of Foreign Wars today with a missing man formation performed by four F-15 Eagles from Missouri International Air Guard, 110th Fighting Squadron.

(Whereupon, the Missing Man Flyover was held at this time.)

RETIRING OF COLORS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Ladies and gentlemen, if you will please stand at attention, we will have our concluding ceremonies.

Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare for the rifle salute and taps. Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare to Retire the Colors.

(Whereupon, the Retiring of the Colors was performed by the VFW National Honor Guard.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Please remain standing as our Gold Star Parents and Gold Star Wives and Medal of Honor Recipients are escorted from the service.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies and the Retiring of the Colors have been

accomplished.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Very good. For the Recessional, the St. Thomas More Celebration Choir will sing "Shine Jesus Shine." This concludes our program and thank you for attending.

(Whereupon, the Memorial Service was concluded at 10:30 o'clock a.m.)

SUNDAY EVENING GALA AUGUST 15, 1999

(The Sunday Evening Gala was called to order at 7:30 o'clock p.m., with Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Smart presiding.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Good evening and welcome to the 100th National Convention Gala event. I am John Smart, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the VFW and your Master of Ceremonies for this evening. I want to express our sincere thanks to Kansas City and Missouri, the "Show Me State" for the welcome we have received.

We are pleased to have all of you with us, especially our VFW National and Department leaders and our VFW Ladies Auxiliary members. We are equally pleased to have our distinguished guests whom I will introduce after dinner.

Please stand for the Invocation and remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance.

INVOCATION

(Whereupon, Father Thomas Neville gave the Invocation at this time, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Enjoy your dinner, enjoy the evening and let us celebrate our 100th Anniversary.

(Whereupon, dinner was served at this time.)

INTRODUCTIONS

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: It is now my pleasure to introduce our head table guests. I shall begin at the lower tier. Some of our guests will be introduced later when we recognize our 100th Anniversary sponsors. Please stand when introduced and remain standing. Audience, please hold your applause until I have completed the lower tier.

We are especially pleased that the Chairman of the League of Ex-Servicemen, Rotterdam, the Netherlands, is able to join us on this historic occasion. It is a pleasure to present Prosper J.G.A. Ego.

We are delighted to have with us tonight a delegation from the Korean Veterans Association, Seoul, Korea. I am pleased to present the

Director of International Affairs, Colonel Yon-Soo Kim, and the Vice-President, Major General Hong-Rae Kim and Mrs. Kim.

Our next guest has been chosen by the Big Ten Conference to be the next Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Jim Goldsmith, and his wife Jan, from Michigan.

It is my pleasure to introduce our guests from the Veterans Affairs Commission, Taipan, Taiwan. May I present the Chairman, General Lee Cheng-lin and Mrs. Lee. Also the Deputy Director, Overseas Liaison, Hans Song.

Let's give them all a warm VFW welcome. (Applause)

I shall now introduce our guests at the upper tier, and to my far left the National Chaplain, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Father Thomas W. Neville from Illinois.

Our next guest is the Defense Department's Director of Operations for the 50th Anniversary, Korean War Commemorative Committee, Lieutenant Colonel James R. Fisher.

The Senior Vice-President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW, Lorraine Frier from North Dakota, and her guest Jack Burnett.

The Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Kenneth Snow and Mrs. Snow from Maine.

I am pleased to present our next guest. He is the Secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission, Major General John P. Herrling, USA (Ret.).

The Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, John J. Senk, Jr., from New Jersey, and his guest Debbie Hannan.

Next is Judge Advocate of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Comrade Earl Lord from Texas.

Our next guest has put forth a lot of efforts as Chairman of the National Convention to assure the success of our 100th Anniversary Convention, James Mueller and his wife Pat from Missouri.

I am especially pleased to present my lovely wife, Mary. Let's give them a round of applause. (Applause)

I shall now introduce those on my far right. We have the Junior Vice-President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW, Pat Jankowski and her husband, John, from Michigan.

Next we have the Inspector General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Norbert Enos from Hawaii and his guest Gerri Harlan.

Next is the Secretary-Treasurer of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Peg Bergeron from New York.

I am pleased to present the lovely and charming wife of our Quartermaster General, Judy Ridgley.

I consider it a distinct honor to introduce the President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW, Jane Bingham from Vermont.

Next is the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, John F. Gwizdak, and his wife Betty, from Georgia.

The Chief of Staff, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Randall Russell, and his wife Marian, from Idaho.

It is certainly my privilege to introduce the lovely and gracious wife of our Commander-in-Chief, Shirley Pouliot. (Applause)

Now, the Quartermaster General and Chairman of the VFW 100th Anniversary Committee, Joe L. Ridgley, will introduce the sponsors for this convention.

(Whereupon, Quartermaster General Ridgley introduced the sponsors at this time.)

INTRODUCTION OF BOB HOPE TAPE

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Today we also want to salute a man who has been an integrate part of us from World War II through Desert Storm. A man, an honorary veteran, who has served his country, a man who we think of as the greatest entertainer of this century.

He has been referred to as a "Hero in Grease Paint." He has been an ambassador of good will throughout this world. We call him "Bob." Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Bob Hope.

(Whereupon, the video by Bob Hope was played at this time.)

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I consider it a pleasure to have the special privilege of introducing the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Throughout our history, the VFW has never yielded to those who have threatened veterans' hard won programs and entitlements.

One individual who has carried the principles and mission to never yield in the never-ending battle to protect veterans' programs and entitlements is our Commander-in-Chief.

Thomas A. Pouliot is a man committed to ensuring that our veterans are taken care of. He is equally committed to ensuring that our national issues are backed by an aggressive legislative agenda.

In this our 100th year, the VFW has truly benefitted from this man's vision to carry on the works and memories of all veterans. By doing so, he stirred us toward two essential areas that will ensure our permanence in the coming millennium, advocating veterans' rights and promoting volunteerism among our Posts and members.

Tom served in the Navy on the carrier USS Coral Sea, while it was conducting operations against North Vietnam in the Gulf of Tonkin.

Following his military service, he received his baccalaureate and law degrees. He has a private law practice in Helena, Montana, and has served as a city judge in East Helena.

A former VFW National Judge Advocate General, Tom served on several national committees, including Americanism, Voice of Democracy,

Legislation and the National Council of Administration's Committee on Appeals, serving as Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

He was an All-American Department Commander for the 1990-91 year.

I am pleased to introduce our Commander-in-Chief, Thomas A. Pouliot, from the Big Sky state of Montana.

REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, John, for that very generous and warm introduction. My remarks tonight will be very brief.

You see standing before you a very proud man who for the last twelve months has had the privilege of leading the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

I have seen the results of the work and services of the two million VFW members and the more than 750,000 members of the Ladies Auxiliary. In every city and town I visited, I saw positive proof that the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary are a dynamic force serving our nation's communities and our nation's veterans.

This year, as we mark our 100th anniversary, has been a pivotal year as the VFW works to ensure that veterans' programs receive proper funding. It has been a year of challenge as we work to maintain the integrity of the VA.

It has been equally challenging as we worked to maintain a strong national defense and ensure an improved quality of life for members of our armed forces.

I have visited our military men and women around the globe. I have been with them in Europe, in Bosnia and on the demilitarized zone, that fragile line separating North and South Korea.

How proud I was to bring your message of support to our troops. That message was made all the more clear and meaningful with those wonderful VFW Operation Uplink calling cards. Those cards are a visible sign of our support. You are to be commended for this tremendous program.

In visiting Southeast Asia and Korea, the fate of our MIAs was always with me. The VFW will continue to lead the way in what we believe to be the best means of achieving our goal of the fullest possible accounting of our MIAs.

We take our role seriously and will continue as we monitor progress and results in working with Vietnam and the other governments of the region. To do less would be a disservice to our members, to those missing and their families and a disservice to what the VFW stands for.

Your efforts and support of every program that we have undertaken in the past year, whether it be in community and youth activities, Voice of Democracy, Buddy Poppy, have proven that working together we can be

successful.

Yes, it has been a very special year for me because I was proud to serve with the finest men and women of our nation, its veterans.

Now, before my personal mission as your Commander-in-Chief draws to an end, I wish to say on behalf of Shirley and myself, thank you for your heard work and support.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I know you have all been wondering about your beautiful table decorations. Well, here is how we are going to give them away. The VFW was founded on September 29, 1899. So, the person at the table with the birthday closest to September 29 gets the centerpiece.

And now we are going to witness a daring attempt by Washington, D.C.'s political satire troop, the Capitol Steps.

The Capitol Steps will now attempt, although others have failed, to be funnier than the Congress. And the Capitol Steps ought to know how funny the Congress is. They have all worked on Capitol Hill. In fact, they began as entertainment for a Capitol Hill office party.

Since they began, the Capitol Steps have appeared on all of the networks and performed for four presidents, five if you include Hillary.

President Bush once said, and this is a real quote, "Golly, the Capitol Steps are really neat."

And so, ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the Capitol Steps. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Capitol Steps performed at this time.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: And now, ladies and gentlemen, to perform the Motown dance hits of the Temptations, Supreme, Four Tops, Martha and the Vandellas, and Marvin Gaye, to the boiling Memphis sound of Otis Redding and Aretha Franklin, the Atlantic Express.

(Whereupon, the Atlantic Express performed at this time.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I would like to thank the audience and our honored guests for being with us this evening. Ladies and gentlemen, this concludes our program. Will our National Chaplain, Father Thomas W. Neville, please come to the podium and give the Benediction.

BENEDICTION

(Whereupon, Father Thomas Neville gave the Benediction at this time.)

(Whereupon, the Sunday Gala was concluded at 11:30 o'clock p.m.)

JOINT OPENING SESSION
MONDAY, AUGUST 16, 1999

(The Joint Opening Session of the 100th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the 86th National Convention of the Ladies Auxiliary was called to order on Monday, August 16, 1999, at 8:30 o'clock a.m., in the H. Roe Bartle Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri, by Comrade James R. Mueller, Chairman of the VFW 100th National Convention Committee.)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Good morning. I am John Senk, Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Before we get into our program for this morning, the Commander-in-Chief would like to recognize some very special VFW and Ladies Auxiliary members.

Will you please give a warm welcome to the National Outstanding Community Service Posts represented here by the Post Commanders and Auxiliary Presidents. As they march in, you will see their Posts shown on the video screen.

A lot of things have changed since the VFW was founded 100 years ago, but there is one thing that has remained unchanged and that is the importance of membership. It gives us our strength, power and influence. This morning, I am proud to introduce the All-American Post and District Commanders, the members who have done so much this year in membership recruiting and in promoting our VFW programs. As they enter the hall, please look at the video screens where their names are displayed and give them our congratulations on a job well done.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, much of what it is today is due to the foresight and determination of one man, a veteran of the Spanish-American War, and a man who was one of the founders of the VFW, James Putnam. We are most fortunate to have with us today his daughter, Helen Putnam-Blackwell, and his granddaughter, Vickie Blackwell-Norvell. Ladies and gentlemen, please give them a warm welcome as they rise to be recognized.

INTRODUCTION OF PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Leadership is a quality that is very hard to define, but you know when it's there and you miss it when it isn't. This morning, we would like to recognize some people who were real leaders when real leaders were needed, the Past Commanders-in-Chief and the Past National Presidents. Please give them a warm VFW welcome. We are putting them on the screen so that you can get a good look at every one of these great leaders.

1949-1950, Past Commander-in-Chief Clyde A. Lewis.

1956-57, Past Commander-in-Chief Cooper T. Holt.

1958-59, John W. Mahan.

1960-61, Ted C. Connell.

1961-62, Robert E. Hansen.
 1970-71, Past Ladies President Mary Cottone.
 1973-74, Ray R. Soden, Commander-in-Chief. Past National President of the Ladies Auxiliary Odie Lee Gossett.
 1974-75, Past Commander-in-Chief John J. Stang.
 1975-1976, Past Commander-in-Chief Thomas C. Walker, and Past National President Glenn Grossman.
 1976-77, Past Commander-in-Chief R. D. Smith, Jr., and Past National President Mary Souders.
 1977-78, Past Commander-in-Chief John Wasylik.
 1978-79, Past Commander-in-Chief Eric G. Sandstrom, and Past National President Arlene McDermott.
 1979-80, Past Commander-in-Chief Howard E. Vander Clute, and Past National President Vona Houtz.
 1980-82, Past Commander-in-Chief Arthur J. Fellwock, and Past National President, 1980-81, Jeannette Frank, and 1981-82, Marion Watson.
 1982-83, Past Commander-in-Chief James R. Currieo, and Past National President Florence Taylor.
 1983-84, Past Commander-in-Chief Clifford G. Olson, Jr.
 1984-85, Past Commander-in-Chief Billy Ray Cameron, and Past National President Glenneta Vogelsang.
 1985-86, Past Commander-in-Chief John S. Staum, and Past National President Lucille Suchina.
 1986-87, Past Commander-in-Chief Norman G. Staab, and Past National President Rosemary Mazer.
 1988-89, Past National President Mona Longley.
 1989-90, Past Commander-in-Chief Walter G. Hogan.
 1990-91, Past Commander-in-Chief James L. Kimery, and Past National President Frances Booth.
 1991-92, Past Commander-in-Chief Robert E. Wallace, and Past National President Mary Sears.
 1992-93, Past Commander-in-Chief John M. Carney, and Past National President Maye Vontin.
 1993-94, Past Commander-in-Chief George R. Cramer, and Past National President Juanita Crowe.
 1994-95, Past Commander-in-Chief Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, and Past National President Helen Harsh.
 1995-96, Past Commander-in-Chief Paul A. Spera, and Past National President Helen Lenehan.
 1996-97, Past Commander-in-Chief James E. Nier, and Past National President Eileen Tanner.
 1997-98, Past Commander-in-Chief John E. Moon, and Past National President Connie Atkinson.

Ladies and gentlemen, also with us this morning, sitting here in the front row, is the former Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign

Wars, James E. Bowden. Please rise and be recognized. (Applause)

Now to open the VFW's 100th National Convention is James R. Mueller, of O'Fallon, Missouri, a Past Department Commander, 1992-1993, and a member of the VFW National Council of Administration. Please welcome the Chairman of the VFW's 100th National Convention, Past Department of Missouri Commander, James R. Mueller.

CALL TO ORDER

COMRADE JAMES MUELLER: Comrades and sisters, I am Jim Mueller, Chairman for this 100th VFW National Convention, a milestone in the history of our organization, our country and the area of Veterans Affairs.

I welcome you on behalf of myself and all who are working so hard to make this, our centennial convention, a great success. We sincerely hope the time that you spend with us will renew your pride in our nation, rededicate your commitment to America's veterans and bring new excitement to your work as a member of the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary.

Please rise as we officially open this centennial convention with the advancing of the colors.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will prepare the room to advance the colors.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Yes, sir, Comrade Chairman.

ADVANCEMENT OF COLORS

(Whereupon, the National Honor Guard advanced the Colors at this time.)

INVOCATION

COMRADE JAMES MUELLER: For this morning's Invocation, we have the National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Father Thomas W. Neville.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Neville gave the Invocation.)

COMRADE JAMES MUELLER: Please remain standing for the posting of the Colors, the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem sung by Erin Asher.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was given followed by the National Anthem sung by Erin Asher.)

SERGEANT-AT ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade National Chairman, the Opening Ceremonies have been performed.

VIDEO PRESENTATION

COMRADE JAMES MUELLER: As the house lights dim, let us sit back and enjoy a short video of our "Veterans Volunteers Year."

(Whereupon, a video presentation was presented on "Veteran Volunteers Year.")

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMRADE JAMES MUELLER: Thomas A. Pouliot was elected to the position of VFW Commander-in-Chief at the organization's 99th National Convention in San Antonio, Texas, on September 4, 1998.

Pouliot served in the United States Navy from January, 1962, through May, 1966. During that time he was assigned to an aviation wing and saw duty on three aircraft carriers, the USS Independence, the USS Midway and the USS Coral Sea. He was aboard the Coral Sea when it conducted operations against North Vietnam from the Gulf of Tonkin. He was awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, and several Navy unit commendations.

He joined the VFW in 1977 at Post 1116 in Helena, Montana. Since that time, he has held several elected and appointed positions in the organization, including National Judge Advocate General, Chairman of the National Legislative Committee, Vice-Chairman of the National Voice of Democracy Committee, and Vice-Chairman of the National Americanism Committee. He was an All-American Department Commander in 1990-1991.

He received his law degree from the University of Montana Law School. He has a private law practice and has served as a city judge in East Helena, Montana.

His theme as Commander-in-Chief, "Veteran Volunteers", captured the pioneering spirit of those who founded the VFW and of those who have taken it through its first century of service.

Comrades and sisters, please join me in welcoming our centennial year Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot.

REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much, Jim. Comrades, sisters and distinguished guests, welcome to the Veterans of Foreign Wars 100th National Convention. We are proud this year. It doesn't get any better than this. We are here, of course, to conduct our business as usual, but also to celebrate this our first 100 years of service to our American veterans, to their communities and to our nation.

We were founded in 1899 by veterans of the Spanish American War. The VFW is America's oldest veterans organization, and as such we have led the way in veterans affairs during this war torn century.

One of our first members, President Teddy Roosevelt, said, "A man who is good enough to shed his blood for his country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards; more than that no man is entitled to, and less than that no man shall have."

We live by those words and we believe in those rules. That is the premise upon which we have operated for a century. It is the premise upon which we will build our second century of service.

When the VFW was founded, there was no field of Veterans Affairs as we know them today. We started Veterans Affairs, we set the course that the VA would follow to this day. Part of the work of this 100th Annual Convention is to set the course for the next 100 years. If we always want to have the America we have today, we will need a military; and if we have a military, we will have veterans; and if we have veterans there will have to be a VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary there to take care of them. We can count on that. Veterans can count on that.

Those who attended that first meeting back in September of 1899 came as volunteers. They set the tone this organization would follow through its first century, volunteerism. We know what has to be done, we marshal our forces, and we get things done. We are the VFW, with two million members, two million volunteers ready, willing and able to serve our veterans, their communities and our nation. And right beside us is the Ladies Auxiliary. I cannot praise them, or their President, Jane Bingham, enough for what they have done to make this veteran volunteers' year the success it has been. Thank you Jane and ladies of our Auxiliary.

Jane's theme, "Volunteerism - The Ultimate Gift", was the perfect match for mine, and together we have set records and reached new milestones this year, not the least which was throwing out the first ball at Kauffman Stadium. I fired one in and Jane got it right in the center of the glove to a standing ovation. We have been a team all this year, we, the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary.

Because of us veterans today are better off than they were a year ago, thanks to the strength, power and influence of the VFW. Legislation, VFW-backed legislation, was pushed through Congress this year that increased entitlements, improved entitlements and insured that veterans get what they deserve. We never questioned our country when it called on us, and now it should not question us when we call on it for the care and attention veterans deserve.

We want a "square deal" for those who have served and for those who are serving today. Stretched far and wide and very thin, today's military is being asked to protect a world fraught with dangers. Yet if we did not go out there and hold the line much of what earlier generations had fought and died for would be lost.

Our troops today preserve a very special heritage, a heritage of freedom for which America paid the price, time after time after time in this war-torn century.

Our business here, then, is not just veterans affairs, it's America's business as well. It is the quest for freedom and democracy, for a world at peace and a promising future.

Our VFW founders had a vision of the future, and you and I have fulfilled that vision. Now it is up to us to have a vision of our future and

set a course to reach it.

There is no better way to celebrate this 100th anniversary than to set the course for the next one hundred.

God bless you, God bless the VFW and God bless America.

INTRODUCTION - THE HONORABLE KAY WALDO BARNES,
MAYOR OF KANSAS CITY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: To start our convention, Kansas City has been home to the VFW National Headquarters since 1930. Just a year after relocating here, the VFW held its 1931 National Convention in Kansas City. Through the years we have formed a close relationship with the local community.

This morning we are honored to have as a guest a person who, as the recently-elected Mayor of Kansas City, will lead this thriving metropolis into the new century. She has much in common with those of us in the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary. She began her public service as a community volunteer. She then went on to become an elected official, a businesswoman, and a pioneer in women's organizations.

She also found time to produce and co-host a television talk show, and co-authored a book on time management. She has served on the faculties of the University of Missouri, University of Kansas and Central Michigan University.

She has served on the Jackson County Legislature, the City Council and the Tax Increment Financing Commission. She knows city government inside and out, and that is why the citizens of Kansas City elected her to her present position in April of this year.

Please give a warm VFW welcome to Her Honor, Mayor Kay Barnes of Kansas City, Missouri. (Applause)

GREETINGS - THE HONORABLE KAY BARNES,
MAYOR OF KANSAS CITY

MAYOR BARNES: Good morning. It is a pleasure for me to be here this morning to welcome you to our city. We are so proud of having your 100th Anniversary celebration in our city, the home of the VFW. It is truly an honor for all of us, and as I look out around this room I am moved by the recognition of what you have given to our country, to our communities around this country and literally to the world.

The contributions that you have made, some in the past, some in the recent past, and certainly all of us today it lends meaning, great meaning to your being with us. I personally thank you for all of your contributions, and we are indeed honored to have you with us and we hope you have a wonderful convention. Thank you. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE MEL CARNAHAN, GOVERNOR OF MISSOURI

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much for that warm welcome. Our next guest is a veteran himself, having served in the United States Air Force. Following military service, he attended law school at the University of Missouri-Columbia, and graduated with the highest honors.

He entered the political arena at the age of 26, when he was elected as a municipal judge in his hometown of Rolla, Missouri. Two years later, he was elected to the Missouri House of Representatives, where he was elected Majority Leader during his second term. Twice during his tenure in the House, he was recognized by the St. Louis Globe-Democrat for his outstanding public service.

In 1980, he was elected State Treasurer, a position where he gained wide recognition as a careful money manager who actually saved taxpayers millions of dollars.

In 1988, he was elected Lieutenant Governor, winning by a large number of votes. He followed this with a successful run for the governorship in 1992, again gaining a landslide vote. And four years later he remained in office with another landslide vote.

Known for economic development, tough anti-crime legislation, education reform and a very careful management of taxpayers' hard-earned dollars, he is positioning his state for growth and success in the new century.

Please give a warm VFW welcome to Mel Carnahan, Governor of the great state of Missouri. (Applause)

GREETINGS - THE HONORABLE MEL CARNAHAN

GOVERNOR CARNAHAN: Thank you, Commander. On behalf of the citizens of the state of Missouri, welcome to this centennial convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We are very proud that Kansas City has served as your national home since 1930.

One hundred years ago, a young veteran of the Spanish American War pedaled his bicycle through the streets of Columbus, Ohio, trying to locate other veterans who were interested in starting an organization that would look after veterans' interests.

Your history tells us that 13 veterans attended this meeting in that tailor shop. From that small beginning, through the veterans organization that you enjoy today, the VFW is an organization two million members strong. During this past century, the VFW has built a remarkable record of community service and patriotism, and has helped our veterans to receive many of the recognitions and benefits that they so richly deserve.

To give just one example, there probably would never have been any G.I. Bill if the VFW had not lobbied Congress so persistently and

strongly. That G.I. Bill has made a major difference in the lives of thousands and thousands of families in this country. I know, because our family is one of them.

When I was released from active duty in the Air Force in 1956, Jeanne and I and our one child had to find a new starting in civilian life. The G.I. Bill helped me do what I wanted to do, to go to law school at the University of Missouri. So our family owes a huge debt of gratitude to the VFW for making the G.I. Bill possible.

On this centennial milestone of the VFW, all of us should realize the huge debt of gratitude we owe to the VFW, and even more important we should recognize the huge debt of gratitude we owe American veterans. This has truly been the century of the American veteran.

Time and time again our fighting men and women have traveled to foreign shores to ensure that our sacred democracy would not just survive but with triumph. As Americans, it is imperative that we never forget the sacrifices that our veterans have made. To forget those sacrifices would be to turn our backs on the ideals and the actions that have forged this nation and its greatness.

Here in Missouri, I have been working to make certain that Missouri veterans are properly recognized. One example is what we have done to make sure that any Missouri veteran who wants a final resting place of honor will have it. In Missouri, our only national cemetery with remaining space for veterans is expected to be filled in ten years.

So I urged our State Legislature to send me legislation that would authorize the construction of five new veterans cemeteries all across our state. Construction has already gotten underway at two of the sites, at Higginsville and Springfield. We promised our veterans a place of honor and I believe that promise should be kept.

We also are particularly proud that we have made Missouri the first state in the nation to implement a military funeral honors program. Before this system, our state veterans organizations, such as the VFW, bore the sole responsibility for military funeral honors. But because of the many requests, because of the lack of honor details in many locations, this service was unavailable to many veterans' families.

Under our new program, which just started last month, teams of state employees, comprised of current and former military members and National Guard members, will be used in addition to our veterans service organizations for honor details. These teams will be available seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Our first military funeral honor guards are located in Kansas City, Springfield, Jefferson City, Cape Girardeau and St. Louis. However, any local veterans organization that wants to become an honor detail can receive training from our Missouri National Guard.

We have forwarded the concept for this new program to the National Guard, and it is my understanding that a national program is being considered that would follow Missouri's example.

Now, as the first 100 years of VFW service and its commitment to veterans has come to a close, this organization must face the challenge of seeing that our veterans are properly honored and cared for in the new century. We know this may not be easy in a society where wars against powers are no longer demanding the active involvement of every United States citizen.

Back there in World War II, when one American served, we all served. Everyone did his or her part in the war efforts. But today, too many of our citizens perceive war to be more a battle of technology than of people. It is up to us to constantly remind them that no matter how sophisticated the weapons become our brave men and women in the field are the ones that are planning the strategy for their use and their unleashing of their mighty force. Their lives are put in danger every day they serve.

No matter how complex war becomes, it will always demand that our fighting men and women leave home to risk their lives to protect our way of life. One of the responsibilities of our generation must be to teach the next generation what a vital role our veterans have played in guaranteeing the future of America and how important it is for the next generation to continue to repay the debt they owe to our veterans through their remembrance and their support.

As one wise man has told us, "Freedom has never been given as a gift, but only as a reward bravely earned by one's own exertion." As we prepare to begin a new century, our hope must be generations of Americans that follow us recognize the truth of that statement, that the freedom they enjoy is not a gift, but a reward that must be constantly earned.

We will look to the VFW to help ensure that citizens remember, honor and support those who put their lives on the front lines. Because our veterans serve, America can continue to earn the reward that is the foundation of our democracy, that precious gift of freedom. Thank you and have a great convention in Kansas City.

PRESENTATION OF AMERICAN FLAG SETS

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: It is now my pleasure to introduce Mary Lou Miller, the Ladies Auxiliary National Patriotic Instructor, to present a flag set to Mayor Barnes and Governor Carnahan. Let's give them another round of applause.

NATIONAL PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR MARY LOU MILLER: To my National Commander-in-Chief Pouliot, our National President Jane Bingham, the National Officers, Delegates, Comrades, Sisters and Friends: A generation or so ago a song entitled "Turn, Turn, Turn" was published. The words were not original because they were taken from the most printed book of all times, The Holy Bible. The lyrics were taken from the Book of Ecclesiastes, and maybe hearing the verse you may recall the song.

"To every thing there is a season, and a time for everything under the heavens.

"A time to be born, and a time to die, a time to plant, and a time to pluck uproot the plants;

"A time to kill, and a time to heal: a time to tear down and a time to build up;

"A time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance:

"A time to seek and a time to lose; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together: a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing:

"A time to love and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace."

During the growth of this great nation, the United States has experienced many, if not all these seasons, as she matured and perfected a lifestyle that we now enjoy. These seasons were inspired by a symbol of freedom, the American Flag. Francis Hopkinson, the delegate to the Continental Congress from New Jersey, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, felt it was time that we Americans had a new flag since we had broken away from Great Britain.

He designed a new flag that was accepted by Congress on June 14, 1777. On that day, Congress adopted the following Resolution: "Resolved that the flag of the United States be 13 stripes, alternating red and white, that the union be 13 stars, white on a blue field representing a new constellation."

The Stars and Stripes, as the flag is often called, have not changed over the years much. A lot more stars have been added to that constellation. The flag continues to represent what our country stands for, freedom, justice, equality and opportunity. From the time of our country's birth, we have planted and rebuilt, wept and mourned, laughed and danced, sought and loved, experienced the ravages of war and the celebration of peace.

The Stars and Stripes have been with us in all of these seasons, giving us hope and encouragement in the bad times and festivity and joy in the good times. Is it any wonder that we look upon our flag with loyalty, devotion and respect? She not only represents her country, but each of us, the citizens of these United States of America.

We are here this morning to present the American Flag to two recipients chosen by our National President Jane Bingham.

Jane, will you join me at the podium to make these presentations. Our first flag will be presented to Mayor Kay Barnes, the Mayor of Kansas City. Our second flag is given to the Governor of Missouri, Mel Carnahan.

In conclusion, I would like to share with you and cite a poem entitled "I Am Your Flag." The author is unknown.

"I am your flag. I was born on June 14, 1777. I am more than just a cloth shaped into a design. I am the refuge of the world depressed. I am the silent sentinel of freedom. I am the inspiration of which American patriots gave their lives and fortunes.

"I have led your sons into battle from Valley Forge to the bloody jungles in Vietnam. I have walked in silence with each of your honored dead to their resting place, silent crosses, row upon row. I have flown through peace and war, drives in prosperity, and amidst it all I have been respected.

"My red stripe symbolized the blood spilled in defense of this glorious nation. My white stripe signifies the burning tears shed by Americans who lost sons. My blue is indicative of God's heaven under which I fly. My stars and stripes together, unifying 50 states as one for God and country. Old Glory is my nickname and proudly I wave on high. Honor me, respect me. Defend me with your lives and your fortunes.

"Never let my enemies tear me down from lofty position, lest I never return. Keep alight the fires of patriotism. Strive earnestly for the spirit of democracy. Worship eternal God and keep his commandments, and I shall remain the bulwark of peace and freedom for all mankind." Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS TO 1999 ALL AMERICAN DEPARTMENT COMMANDERS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Ladies and gentlemen, it is with great pleasure that I present to you the 1998-1999 team of All American Department Commanders. The selection of this year's team members was based on a combination of a minimum of 100 percent membership or by achieving the designated "fair share" of new and reinstated members and/or Life Members.

The Commander-in-Chief will present them with their caps of distinction. They are as follows:

John W. Minnick, Commander of Alaska.

Quinn A. Weiss, Commander of Arizona.

Warren R. Tellgren, Commander of Colorado.

William T. Robbins, Commander of Delaware.

Sidney L. Jenkins, Commander of Europe.

Harvey F. Eckhoff, Commander of Florida.

Roy C. White, Commander of Idaho.

Landry E. Saucier, Commander of Louisiana.

Raymond R. Lupo, Commander of Maine.

Joseph R. Gauthier, Commander of Massachusetts and Co-Captain of this year's team.

Antonio Borjas, Commander of Missouri.

Daryl L. Mobley, Commander of Nevada.

Joe F. Ford, Commander of New Mexico.

Jack T. Smith, Commander of New York, and Co-Captain of the All-American Team of the Department Commanders.

George H. Cox, Commander of Ohio.

H. Merle Jackson, Commander of Oregon.

Frank J. Sass, Commander of the Pacific Areas.

William D. Bell, Commander of Texas.

Sanford Beshar, Commander of Utah, and Co-Captain of the All American Team.

Edward H. Laviletta, Commander of Vermont.

Unfortunately, Pete Quinnell, Commander of Wyoming, could not be with us today.

It is now my pleasure to announce the Captain of the 1998-99 All American Team, Travis E. Whaley, Commander of the Department of Alabama.

Will the All American Post, District and Department Commanders please stand and be recognized as the 1998-99 team of All American Commanders.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

PRESENTATION OF "CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP" CITATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: At this time, Commander-in-Chief Pouliot would like to present a very special citation to the Department of Arizona. For 32 years, the members of the Department of Arizona have worked together as a team to increase VFW membership throughout the state.

Each member of the Department of Arizona can take pride in their many years of dedication and hard work that went in to reaching this milestone.

Now, in recognition of those efforts, I would like to call on Quinn A. Weiss, the Immediate Past Department Commander of Arizona, to accept this "Consecutive Years of Membership Growth" Citation. Congratulations to the Department of Arizona.

This Citation reads as follows:

"Certificate of Commendation, Department of Arizona.

"In recognition of 32 consecutive years of membership growth evidencing the attainment of three decades of continuous membership gain by a Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 16th day of August, 1999." It has been signed by Commander-in-Chief Thomas Pouliot and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

COMRADE QUINN WEISS (Department of Arizona): As you all know, it takes a well developed team. I would just like to ask all the Past Department Commanders from the State of Arizona to please rise, because you are part of what made this come true today. Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION
TO THE 99TH NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEE

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief Pouliot will now present a Certificate of Appreciation to the 99th National Convention Committee for their work in planning and conducting last year's convention in San Antonio, Texas. To accept the award on behalf of the committee is Jim Nier, Past Commander-in-Chief and Chairman of the 99th National Convention Committee. This citation reads:

"Certificate of Appreciation presented to the 99th National Convention Committee in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of their dedication and tireless efforts to ensure the success of the 99th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States held in San Antonio, Texas, August 29-September 4, 1998.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 16th day of August, 1999." It has been signed by Thomas Pouliot, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. I accept this Certificate on behalf of all the comrades and sisters in the great Department of Texas who worked so diligently to make the 99th Annual Convention the success that it was.

I want to thank Commander-in-Chief John Moon for selecting me as the Chairman. I wish to thank my Co-Vice-Chairmen, Past Commander-in-Chief Ted Connell and Glen Gardner, Adjutant Quartermaster of the Department of Texas, and all the committee chairmen, and 250 plus volunteers from the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary in Texas, and the National staff.

I would ask this Certificate be placed in our Department Headquarters as a token of appreciation for all of the hard work that the comrades and sisters did. I would only hope that at some future convention you will come back to Texas, and particularly San Antonio. Thank you very much and God bless you all.

INTRODUCTION OF COLONEL JAMES R. FISHER,
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, KOREAN WAR COMMEMORATION
COMMITTEE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Ladies and gentlemen, as a nation, we are preparing to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Korean War. Events and programs have already begun and will continue through November 11, 2003.

The 50th anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration will give the nation the opportunity to officially honor Korean War veterans, especially the 33,629 Americans killed in action during the Korean War. Also, as a nation, we honor the service and sacrifice of our armed forces

and those of our allies for their courage and valor in preventing the spread of Communism.

This morning, we are happy to have with us Lieutenant Colonel James R. Fisher, Director of Operations of the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Committee. Lieutenant Colonel Fisher will present the Veterans of Foreign Wars with a flag that marks the 50th anniversary of the Korean War and the commemorative period.

We are honored to work with the committee in honoring our Korean War veterans and marking this important commemorative period. Please join me in a warm welcome for Lieutenant Colonel James Fisher. (Applause)

REMARKS BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAMES FISHER

LIEUTENANT COLONEL FISHER: Commander-in-Chief Pouliot, Comrades, Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am Jim Fisher. I am the Director of Operations of the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration. The official commemoration for the United States of America of the Korean War starts on June 25th, the year 2000, and it runs through November 11th, 2003.

It is our sole mission to thank and honor our Korean War veterans and ensure they are not forgotten any longer. We will also honor the families of those veterans, and those that lost loved ones in that war. We also have won one major victory already. It has already passed through Congress. It is no longer recognized as a Korean conflict but it is now known as the Korean War.

Before we make the official presentation, I am going to start the first official commemoration here. The VFW has always been our ally in every one of our events in honoring and thanking our veterans, no matter whether World War II, Korean War, Vietnam or whatever. They are always number one in helping us to recognize them.

At this time I would like all Korean War veterans to please stand and be recognized. These are our forgotten heroes right here. I salute you, sirs. We need your help during the next three years. We would like to have every VFW Post to be a commemorative community.

We have a booth, No. 200, so please stop by and get information. We are going to make sure that every town and city across the United States is involved in this commemoration. With that I would like to present the VFW with the first official commemorative flag honoring the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War.

With that goes the official certificate signed by the Secretary of Defense, the Honorable William Cohen. I would like to present that now to your Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: On behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I thank you for those very kind words, and you know that you

can count on us to help you to commemorate this period, this service and these soldiers.

PRESENTATION OF VFW GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION TO LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT JANE BINGHAM

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: At this time I would like to introduce the National President of our Ladies Auxiliary.

"Volunteerism — The Ultimate Gift" set the tone for Jane Bingham's year as National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. For 85 years, the Ladies Auxiliary has played a very important role in furthering the interests of America's veterans and their families, and volunteerism has been the basis of their success.

Jane is a Life Member of Addison County Auxiliary 7823 in Vermont. She is, by the way, the first Vermonter to hold the position of National President. I am proud of that. Three times an Auxiliary President, she twice won honors as Outstanding Auxiliary President and once as runner-up Outstanding President.

At the District level, Jane served twice as Secretary, three times as Trustee. Her hard work and dedication as a State President won her recognition as an Outstanding President of the Year.

She has served as a Chairperson in the Eastern Conference on the Legislative, Rehabilitation and Publicity Programs, and at the National level as Junior Girls Unit Director, Publicity Director, the Cancer Program and Research Director.

This year she has traveled far and wide supporting VFW and Ladies Auxiliary programs, and promoting the celebration of our 100th Anniversary and the 85th Anniversary of the Ladies Auxiliary.

Now, as she comes forth to accept the VFW Gold Medal of Merit and Certificate, please give her a warm VFW welcome.

This citation reads as follows, "Gold Medal of Merit to Jane Bingham, National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"In special recognition of her untiring dedication to our country and in sincere appreciation for her enthusiastic leadership as evidenced by the exceptional contributions of the Ladies Auxiliary to the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and, by their deeds, truly displayed that 'Volunteerism is The Ultimate Gift.'

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the Official Seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 16th day of August, 1999." This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot.

RESPONSE - LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT JANE BINGHAM

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT BINGHAM: I did not come here

to make any speeches, because nobody gave me one. (Laughter) All I would like to say is with any award that goes to a president of anything, that president really doesn't earn that award. The people that work with her and for her do. So thank you very, very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Jane said the best thing she did all week was when I threw out that baseball, and I said the best thing she did was to catch it. She has done a wonderful job this year and I have been very pleased to travel with her this year and to work with her this year. I think together we have made a very great team.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE EINAR V. DYHRKOPP,
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: On this day, the nation's military veterans, police officers and fire fighters are honored with a new commemorative postage stamp issued by the U.S. Postal Service. The "Honoring Those Who Served" stamp pays tribute to the patriotism and valor of the thousands of dedicated U.S. military veterans who have served their country both here and abroad.

This stamp also serves as a lasting tribute to those policemen, fire fighters, and other law enforcement officers who have given their lives to protect the welfare of all Americans.

The "Honoring Those Who Served" stamp salutes those public servants and all veterans who have served in the U.S. armed forces, whether in wartime or peacetime, in active units, the Reserves, or the National Guard. The stamp recognizes the vital and varied roles veterans have played to ensure peace, to stop aggression, and to provide logistical support during crisis.

It is my great pleasure to introduce the Honorable Einar V. Dyhrkopp, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the United States Postal Service, who is with us this morning to officially dedicate the "Honoring Those Who Serve" commemorative stamp to the people of the United States.

REMARKS - THE HONORABLE EINAR V. DYHRKOPP

MR. DYHRKOPP: Thank you and good morning. I am doubly delighted to represent the United States Postal Service today as we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the VFW and honor our veterans as well as our nation's police officers and fire fighters with the new commemorative stamp appropriately called "Honoring Those Who Served."

As a veteran myself, I feel at home with this audience. I served in the Navy during World War II. My ship had the distinction, if that is the correct word, of surviving six direct kamikaze hits, all with five hundred

pound bombs attached, without sinking. She was a floating junk pile at the end of the attack, but she was still floating.

Today there are more than 25 million American veterans who live in the United States and there are 1.4 million persons on active duty in the military. This is very important, and I think all of us ought to remember this. We must never forget these men and women who have served our country so well.

In addition, when you add to that number 2.3 million men and women who work in protective services, you can see that we have many to honor with this new stamp. Many have given their lives to protect our welfare — under its brave each new day, often unnoticed, to maintain peace and preserve our American ideas.

Now, these stamps will be 80 million tiny reminders of the tremendous acts of courage performed by veterans, police officers, fire fighters and other law enforcement officers. The U.S. Postal Service Stamp Program is a unique platform for recognizing our nation's legacy. For more than 150 years, the Postal Service has focused national attention on the events and ideas of people that have made this nation great.

With the honoring of those who served, we continue that proud position. This stamp pays tribute to the patriotism and valor of the thousands of dedicated military veterans who serve or have served their country both here and abroad. This stamp is for you, those who put the safety and well-being of others before their own, those who with selfless acts of courage and kindness inspired, astonished and motivated all the rest of us. And especially this stamp is for the men and women, our fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters and friends who give their lives to protect and serve others.

In just a moment I am going to ask three people to join me to unveil this stamp. Two of them you know well, Tom Pouliot and Jane Bingham. The third, you probably don't know his name. His name is Elmer Timms. He is a rural carrier from Springfield, Missouri, and he is sitting down here in the front row. He is down there somewhere. At age 79, with 53 years of Postal Service, he is the oldest veteran working for the Postal Service in this part of the country.

Now, on behalf of the United States Postal Service and its 870,000 employees, it is my privilege to unveil the "Honoring Those Who Served" commemorative stamp. Will Commander-in-Chief Pouliot and National President of the Ladies Auxiliary Jane Bingham, please join me.

Commander-in-Chief Pouliot and Ladies Auxiliary President Bingham, thank you very much. I would like to give you this reproduction of the stamp. Thank you ever so much and God bless this country.

INTRODUCTION OF MOC COMMANDER MARTY ELLINGWOOD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The Military Order of the Cootie has been a vital part of the VFW since 1919. In the ensuing 80

years, they have done an outstanding job in serving America's veterans. From their hospital program, "Keep 'em Smiling in Beds of White," to their support of the VFW National Home, the Cooties have fulfilled our VFW commitment to "Honor the Dead by Helping the Living" in everything they do.

Here to address the convention is the 1999-2000 Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie, Marty Ellingwood. Please give a welcome to our Cooties' Supreme Commander.

REMARKS - MOC COMMANDER MARTY ELLINGWOOD

MOC COMMANDER ELLINGWOOD: I hope all those boos were from the Cooties. Where is your green card? It is indeed a distinct honor for me to address this delegation. I bring you the apologizes of our Immediate Past Supreme Commander Stephen S. Wheeler from Georgia. His mother had fallen and he could not be here today because he is back there with her. It is not the way I wanted to address this delegation, but we will press on.

Good morning, Comrades, Cooties, Sisters, VFW Ladies Auxiliary, the Women's Auxiliary to the Military Order of the Cootie and other distinguished guests to this 100th Annual VFW Convention.

To Tom Pouliot, Commander-in-Chief, your lovely wife Shirley, to John Smart, and his lovely wife, I am looking forward to an outstanding year with you, John. This is easy, the other John, you and your lovely wife, we will support you as well.

In just a few short days, John Smart will be the Commander-in-Chief, and I am extremely proud to have him as my Commander-in-Chief so we can work along side-by-side for both organizations. I pledge full support for all the VFW programs of the Military Order of the Cootie for the ensuing year.

I am proud to have been a veteran volunteer and I look forward to a new century of service where we can continue delivering for veterans in the 21st Century. The Military Order of the Cootie will continue with our vigorous support of hospitals, working for the veterans, and sincerely trying to "Keep 'em Smiling in Beds of White."

We are proud to offer the new administration a stronger and more aggressive VFW booster program. We proudly submitted our Initiatives 2000 to the National Headquarters for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and I will be very proud and hope that next year we can address the convention that those initiatives were fulfilled to the fullest extent.

There are great people in this country, but I would like to remind you that there are none better than those here and none greater than those who were members of this Veterans of Foreign Wars organization, the VFW Auxiliary and the Military Order of the Cootie and the Women's Auxiliary to the Military Order of the Cootie.

Again, Tom Pouliot, Commander-in-Chief, John Smart, Senior Vice

Commander-in-Chief, I am proud and humble and pledge that we will truly support you and your programs. I am proud of and thank the comrades, sisters and Cooties of the great state of Wyoming for their support over the past years as I have progressed through the chairs to the position of Supreme Commander in the Military Order of the Cootie.

It is truly the honor degree of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. A special thanks to the members of the Post and Pup Tent that I am so proud to proclaim membership in, Post 4343, in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Pup Tent One in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

To my lovely wife, who could not be here this week, I love you all, I love this country, I love the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Military Order of the Cootie. Again, thank you. Have a great convention and throw a little bit of fun in there, too, so we can continue the great work of the organizations that we belong to. God bless each and every one of you.

INTRODUCTION OF MELODY WARING, 1999 NATIONAL YOUTH ESSAY WINNER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: This was the fourth year of the Youth Essay Contest, a competition designed to give seventh, eighth and ninth-grade students an opportunity to express their opinion on a patriotic theme. This year it was "What Freedom Means to Me."

The Youth Essay Contest was again very successful in this, the fourth year of the contest, considering the fact that it is still a very new Youth Contest. We can be very proud of the results.

Over 75,000 students entered the competition nationwide. All 54 Departments submitted a winner. Savings bonds and other incentives, totalling over \$569,000, were generously given by our membership to young people throughout our great nation.

We are very pleased to have with us this morning the 1999 National Winner of the Youth Essay competition. She was an eighth-grade home-schooled student when she wrote her winning essay. She is sponsored by VFW Post 5860 and its Ladies Auxiliary from Spearfish, South Dakota, and is accompanied by her father, mother and brothers.

Here to present her award-winning essay: "What Freedom Means To Me", the 1999 First Place National Youth Essay Winner and recipient of a \$10,000 United States Savings Bond, Melody Waring.

YOUTH ESSAY CONTEST WINNER - MELODY WARING

MS. WARING: I am so honored and so excited to be here. I want to give a very heartfelt thank you to the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary.

"What Freedom Means to Me."

The year is 1942. A chill is in the air. A 12-foot wall of powerful electrical fencing surrounds the camp. A sneering voice is calling out the roll. Suddenly an emaciated young man falls to the ground in a paralytic

fit of coughing. The Nazi official laughs and kicks the man until he lies still, never to get up again. Perhaps somewhere people are happy. Perhaps somewhere people are free. Not in this German concentration camp.

The year is 1936. Behind a locked door, a woman clutches her small son desperately. From outside comes the even tread of marching. With a final, terrified glance at the bolt on the door, the woman hides in a dark corner of the room. She knows it is futile. No one escapes the Secret Police. No one has any privilege. Not in the Great Purge of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The year is 1955. A few miles away an orchard smolders in its ruin. A leader of the Algerian revolt shakes his turbaned head sadly as he is led away by French Army officials. He is to be thrown into a concentration camp and tortured, along with millions of other native Algerians. He and his people had struggled and revolted for freedom to no avail; all is hopeless here in sun-baked Algeria.

The year is this year. It is a Sunday morning in America and people nationwide stroll through the doors of churches. It is a Saturday evening and people nationwide are printing deluxe editions of their newspapers, voicing freely their opinions and feelings on everything from dieting to politics. It is a Tuesday afternoon and children nationwide are pouring out of their school buildings where they are taught without prejudice towards race or sex.

It is because of our freedom that we do not live in the shadow of a concentration camp; it is because of our freedom that we need not cover behind locked doors afraid of Secret Police; it is because of our American freedom that we are not in a revolt against an over-powering authority.

Freedom: to worship unshackled, to speak uninhibited, to attend schools without being shunned, to vote for the leaders of our nation, to stand against what is wrong, and to fight for what is right. This is what freedom means to me.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Melody, it is my honor and privilege to present to you this first place trophy indicating you are national winner for the Youth Essay Contest for 1999. Along with this goes a \$10,000 savings bond. I am very proud of you. Your speech was very moving and very touching. I think there is no doubt in my mind why you were selected as our national winner. Thank you very much and good luck in the future.

INTRODUCTION OF HEIDI HOLLEY - VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Over the past fifty-two years, the Voice of Democracy contest has enabled high students from across the country and overseas to think, write and speak out for freedom and democracy.

At the same time, these students now compete for over \$132,500

in national scholarships, not to mention over \$2.5 million in countless awards and scholarships given annually by Posts, Districts, Departments and their respective Ladies Auxiliaries. These VFW scholarships enable many young Americans to continue their education in colleges and universities of their own choosing.

We are pleased to have with us today the 1999 First Place National Winner in the Voice of Democracy contest.

She graduated from Del Campo High School in Fair Oaks, California, was sponsored by VFW Post 2324 and its Ladies Auxiliary in Carmichael, California, and was co-sponsored by VFW Post 9869 in Granite Bay, California.

Here to present her award-winning essay, "My Service to America", the 1999 First-Place National Voice of Democracy Winner and recipient of the \$20,000 T. C. Selman Memorial Scholarship, Heidi Holley

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNER - HEIDI HOLLEY

MS. HEIDI HOLLEY: Thank you. I would like to thank Commander-in-Chief Thomas Pouliot, the Ladies Auxiliary President Jane Bingham, the National Director of Voice of Democracy Program Gordon Thorson, my special friends of the VFW from the great state of California, and all the wonderful Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Ladies Auxiliary.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to be a spokesperson for the youth of America. It is my pleasure and great privilege to serve you this year. I would like to dedicate this special event in my life to my grandfather, a veteran of World War II, the late William Joseph Rosenmont, Sr.

In the early morning hours in March, 1945, a young man floated cold and frightened to near delirium in the tropical waters near Okinawa in the South Pacific. This 18-year-old boy had retired to his bunk the evening before only to be awakened by a sickening thud, then silence, then absolute pandemonium aboard the troop transport ship.

The ship had been hit by Japanese aircraft. He remembers racing up on deck dressed only in his "skivvies". Dazed and confused with no time for a life jacket, he followed many dozens of his fellow shipmates into the black abyss of the Pacific Ocean. Within minutes his ship had vanished beneath the rolling sea.

The pure force of the event had sucked him under so far he was sure he would never surface. He had no idea which way was up or down. As his lungs were bursting with a piercing pain, he suddenly surfaced to so much thrashing, screaming and such human misery he prayed this was a dream and he would wake up at an instant. There would be no escaping this nightmare. He floated for nearly four hours until dawn. He was miraculously uninjured physically, but emotionally the scars would last a lifetime.

He spent those hours bobbing aimlessly, listening to the panicked

cries of the other young sailors, and then to the ever-deafening silence as fewer and fewer survivors hung on. As dawn broke, a rescue ship arrived and plucked the remaining men from the water. My "Poppy" was one of them.

I only had the honor of knowing my quiet, unassuming grandfather for 13 years, but in that short time Poppy demonstrated to me everything I ever needed to know about the importance of service, sacrifice, giving and unconditional love of family and country. He taught me how to fix a few things, too! These were just things he did as easily and naturally as breathing or sipping his morning coffee.

Poppy only talked about his war ordeal once to me but it showed me in one giant example everything about why the United States of America is strong and wonderful. I realized at his death a few years ago that it was now my responsibility to carry on the ability to make life better for all Americans just as he did — one person at a time doing small but significant acts for other people. I learned from him never to take the political process lightly, to actively participate and voice my opinion. I learned that when the community needs a helping hand, like when the floods hit us in 1996, that you pick up and go to a shelter and help prepare meals for evacuees. I learned how good it feels to help run a community food closet. I learned that the graffiti war can be won when a group of my friends and I quickly painted over scribbled buildings at local businesses and roadside walls for a full year until the offenders grew tired of us and went away.

My service to America can never come close to the drama of my Poppy's experience in the South Pacific, but it gives me reason to keep plugging away at the small things. The small things, that's what my Poppy taught me. I know these things will make things just a little bit better for America. As for me, it just makes me feel good.

My service to America means dedication of my life to decency and compassion. I want to instill in my children the importance of protecting every freedom we have been granted as Americans. I will protect and teach these freedoms fiercely.

Robert Byrnnne once said, "The purpose of life is a life of purpose." I will serve my family and my country with a search for excellence in every aspect of my life just as my Poppy did. Sometimes when I feel like I am bobbing aimlessly through the ocean of life, struggling to keep my head above water, I can feel the invisible hands of my grandfather lifting me up and giving me the strength and courage to be a proud part of what makes America strong and wonderful. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: It is my honor and privilege to present to you, Heidi Holley, the first place Voice of Democracy trophy. She is a wonderful example of the great young men and women that we have in our high schools. This is one of the reasons that we have the program year after year is to bring these young people forward. Thank you very much, Heidi. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF VFW AMERICANISM AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO THE HONORABLE MARCY KAPTUR

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: It is a special pleasure to introduce the distinguished Congresswoman from the 9th District of the Buckeye State of Ohio, a distinguished American who has been chosen to receive the 1999 VFW Americanism Award for single-handedly pushing for legislation to build a World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., undeniably the most significant American memorial authorized in the 20th Century.

Her efforts to honor those who served during World War II, both on the home front and in uniform, reflects her commitment to the values of service, patriotism and love of country.

Since the beginning of her political career, Representative Kaptur has committed herself to emphasizing the importance and significance of responsible citizenship and Americanism.

I am pleased to present the 1999 VFW Americanism Award to a great American, a veteran's advocate and friend to the VFW, the Honorable Marcy Kaptur.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The citation reads as follows: "Americanism Award, Gold Medal and Citation presented to Marcy Kaptur, Congresswoman.

"In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition for her many years of dedicated service on behalf of the citizens of this nation, and for her untiring efforts in promoting legislation to build a World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. Her determination to honor those who served both on the home front and in uniform underscores her commitment to the values of service, patriotism and love of country, values which contribute to the betterment of American society.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 16th day of August, 1999. Approved by the National Council of Administration." It has been signed by Thomas A. Pouliot, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - THE HONORABLE MARCY KAPTUR

REPRESENTATIVE KAPTUR: Commander-in-Chief and Mrs. Pouliot, ladies and gentlemen of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, congratulations to you on your 100th Anniversary. What a privilege it is for me to join you today. I just wish every member of my family and community could be here.

At this crossroads of the 20th and 21st Centuries, and with deep appreciation, I accept your award on behalf of freedom's warriors. We, their children and grandchildren, now carry the name of liberty with abiding passion and profoundest gratitude.

When the history among nations in this century is written, without question, allied victory in World War II, and the triumph of freedom over tyranny will rest as its fulcrum, its most solemn and, yes, its most superlative achievement. The war positioned the geo politics of the world at counterpoint, and it held aloft the ideals of liberty that now at century's end remain triumphant as Fascism, Nazism and Communism have been relegated to the ash heap of human kinds failed darkest urges.

Fifty years ago, at the end of the war, the memoirs of E. B. Sledge captured the monumentality of the moment. He said, "Except for a few widely-scattered shouts of joy, these survivors of the Abyss, that hollow eyed trying to comprehend a world without war."

Our grateful nation will always remember these 16 million citizens of valor who served in uniform of all races and religions, farmers and city dwellers, men and women on foreign soil and on the home front, the over 400,000 who loved mercy more than life and sacrificed their lives on three fronts; the 672,000 wounded, the Gold Star mothers, the courageous wives and husbands, children and families. The price of freedom is not free.

Over ten years ago, Roger Durbin, a dogged World War II combat veteran from Ohio, captured my heart when he confided in me he had journeyed to Washington, D.C., with his grandson to visit the World War II Memorial, but none existed. In 1987, I began working on legislation for such a memorial.

Two bills were involved, one to mint coins to pay for the initial cost at no expense to the taxpayer, and the second bill to authorize the memorial itself. Successive Congresses passed both. In October, 1992, President George Bush signed into law the Memorial Coin Bill that launched our efforts as \$7 million of coins were sold. One year later, President Bill Clinton signed into law the World War II Memorial Act.

I also today want to thank hundreds of members of Congress on both sides of the aisle and the Veterans of Foreign Wars for being at our side every single Congress we fought for the passage of this legislation and helped us gain final victory.

I did want to mention the names today of Congressman Sonny Montgomery, now retired, Congressman Henry Hyde, Congressman Bill Clay, Congressman Esteban Torres, Senator Strom Thurmond, Senator Daniel Inouye, Senator Ted Stevens and Senator Robert Dole, who is now the chair of the memorial campaign. I want to thank the Veterans of Foreign Wars for your outstanding multi-million dollar price to the memorial's construction. Thank you so very, very much.

On Veterans Day, 1995, the last year of the 50th Anniversary remembrance of World War II, Roger Durbin and I participated in ceremonies with President Clinton in which the ashes of slain brethren from all fronts gathered from cemeteries across the globe as well as at Arlington hallowed the ground on which the memorial is to be built.

This memorial will commemorate devotion that a half century ago elevated duty, honor and country to sacred proportion. This new museum

will sit astride our Avenue of Democracy, the National Wall, facing the Washington Monument on the east, the Lincoln Memorial on the west, and the Jefferson Memorial on the south.

From President Washington, America drew the fundamentals of self-governance, conveying to our people the awesome power to alter the Constitution itself. From President Jefferson, we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all people are created equal.

From President Lincoln, "With malice toward none, with charity for all, let us do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations." This memorial, on the most significant site of this century, will not be dedicated to a man nor a woman, but rather to a nation and in a time when our people resolve to preserve again the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity.

The bitter cold war that ensued for nearly half century more, tested the wills and valor of freedom-loving people everywhere. Who among us would have thought we would live to see the day that the Berlin Wall would fall and that Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic added to NATO's freedom umbrella.

Now, it passes to us, the children and grandchildren of this great generation, to carry forward to the new millennium their unwavering idealisms and respect for the human spirit. Our task must be to peacefully see the institutions of freedom where they can flower and grow in the next century, to nations whose futures hang in the balance: Ukraine, Vietnam, Columbia, South Africa, the Balkans, Taiwan, the Middle East, India and Pakistan, and so many more.

The cash award, I gratefully accept today, will be matched by our family and placed in the Anastasia Fund, a public charter named in honor of our mother, whose two brothers, Anthony and Stanley, fought and were wounded in World War II: One in the Battle of the Bulge in the Army Engineering Corps, and the other on the China-India-Burma front.

These funds will be dedicated to the advance of freedom's institutions in forgotten places like the villages of Kmel'nyts'ky, Ukraine, and the hamlets of Tanzania, Africa, and Quang Ngai, Vietnam, and the Kaw Valley of Lebanon, and many more places where the political leaders of the next century must be inspired by liberty's call.

The gracious words of Alfred Lord Tennyson in *Ulysses*, "Lift us and guide us to loftier and more peaceful horizon, true to America's purposes as the citadel of freedom, the oldest democratic republic on the face of the earth. So work of noble note may yet be done, not unbecoming men who strove with gods. Come, my friends, it is not too late to seek a newer world onward." Thank you and God's speed, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Let me ask a question. Have you enjoyed the 100th Anniversary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars so far?

The next gentleman I am about to bring to the dais was asked about two years ago to be the chairman of the 100th Anniversary. He has done a herculean job in putting together what you are enjoying this week.

Please welcome to the podium the Quartermaster General and Chairman of the 100th Anniversary, Joe L. Ridgley.

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL RIDGLEY: There is no greater honor that a person can have than to serve in any capacity for an organization as great as the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I appreciate the honor to serve you in this capacity, in the capacity of Quartermaster General and any other capacity that you would have me serve.

I want to thank a few people here. First of all, I would like to thank all the Posts and Departments that have taken on the chore of becoming a Commemorative Post for the 100th Anniversary. We have had a magnificent opportunity to tell the world, and especially America, what the VFW is all about, and those Posts that have become Commemorative Posts and those Departments that have become Commemorative Departments have done exactly that.

I do know that I am not going to mention all the staff right now, but the staff has done a tremendous job. They have put all this together for you. They are continuing to work, and one thing we do need to remember is the 100th Anniversary is not over with this convention.

We are celebrating it here, because most of our delegates are here with us, but it is not over at this convention. We would like you to remember that September 29th is our official birthday that is coming up, and there will be celebrations all over the country for the 100th Anniversary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

There have been a lot of people that have helped us to put this together, many, many people. One group of people that I think we all want to thank is those people that are in the military today that have helped to put on so many events, the flyovers we see, the Navy Band and the Army International Guard, the Joint Services Color Guard. I could go on and on.

I would like all the active duty military to stand up that are in the room. Please stand up so we can thank you. There is a lot more going on after this convention, also. I hope everyone will tune in to the 100th playing of the Army-Navy game on December 4th, which is obviously in conjunction with our 100th Anniversary.

The VFW will be honored at that game on CBS. They will receive honors through the whole game. Our Commander-in-Chief will perform the coin toss. The Army Golden Knights and the Navy Leap Frogs will bring in our 100th Anniversary Flag. On Armed Forces Radio, that goes around the world to all of our forces, the VFW will be thanking those serving us in the hot spots today. You need to tune in and listen because it is going to be a great event and the VFW will be honored on national TV.

Lastly, I just want to say that we also thank you out there that have children and grandchildren, spouses, brothers and sisters, anybody that is currently serving in our armed forces, and especially those who are serving in the hot spots around the world.

There are many of them today: Korea, the Persian Gulf, the Balkans, they are all over. Ladies and gentlemen, we need to thank those

active duty forces that are there with us today and are protecting our freedom as all of you did. You are the heroes of yesterday and they are the heroes of today. We want to thank them even though it is our 100th Anniversary.

Remember the Patriotic Rally. Don't miss that one. Be out there early at the stadium and catch those shuttles. Get out there for the Patriotic Rally that starts at 5:45. It will be an evening that you will never forget. There will be a concert by Kenny Rogers. Just be there, ladies and gentlemen. You are going to love it. Thank you.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Ladies and gentlemen, I now invite you to turn your attention to the video screens for a special tribute to the Veterans of Foreign Wars from the Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright.

(Whereupon, the video was shown at this time.)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: We have been informed that the President has landed and while we are awaiting his arrival the United States Navy Band will entertain us.

(Whereupon, the United States Navy Band performed at this time.)

INTRODUCTION OF PRESIDENT WILLIAM "BILL" CLINTON

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Ladies and gentlemen, today, as we mark the opening of the 100th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its 100 years of service to our nations and its veterans, we pause not only to look back at our deeds and accomplishments but to the future and the challenge before us.

Last year on Veterans Day, November 11, 1998, veterans praised President Clinton for signing into law the VFW-backed Veterans Programs Enhancement Act.

But there still is much to be done to honor the commitment to provide for the health-care needs of our nation's veterans. As we prepare to enter a new century, we look to the administration and the Congress to work together to meet the challenge of providing timely, quality and accessible care to all American veterans. There is much to be done.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my high honor at this time to introduce to the distinguished audience the President of the United States, William Jefferson Clinton. (Applause)

KEYNOTE SPEAKER - THE HONORABLE BILL CLINTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Thank you very much. Commander-in-Chief Pouliot, Distinguished Officers of the VFW, Congressman Skelton, Congressman Moore, Congresswoman Kaptur, Secretary West and Deputy Secretary Gober, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great honor for me to be here in Kansas City today to help to celebrate 100 proud years for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. You should

clap for yourselves. That's it. (Applause)

I would like to begin with just a few reflections of what these 100 years mean for you and for the United States. We are less than 150 days now from the beginning of one century and the end of another, which many have called the American Century. Lately, there have been a number of looks back at the people and personalities and events that made this 20th century; the leaders who led freedom's triumph over tyranny, like Roosevelt, Eisenhower, Marshall; inventors like the Wright Brothers, whose ideas changed the way we lived; moral forces like Martin Luther King and Eleanor Roosevelt, whose ideas and examples changed the world; scientists like Dr. Jonas Salk whose discoveries liberated a generation of parents from the mortal fear that their children would have polio and be crippled.

But if you ask who has been most responsible for making this the American century, one answer would be at the top of anyone's list after two World Wars and a long Cold War. That answer would be America's servicemen and women. (Applause)

Today, as we celebrate your centennial anniversary, we must never forget that tens, even hundreds of millions of people in the United States and all around the world sleep in peace because hundreds of thousands of Americans rest in peace in graves marked and unmarked, all across the world — fallen veterans of foreign wars.

It is no accident, therefore, that the American century also marks the VFW century. For over the last 100 years, American men and women have sacrificed whatever was necessary — not for territorial gain, nor for the domination of others, but to secure the rights and freedoms of others so that Americans might have their freedom secure. You have made our nation proud. (Applause)

Thanks to you, we will begin a new century with a truly historic achievement, for in the last few years, for the first time in all of human history, more than half the world's people live under free governments freely elected. Still, you and I know this is not a world free from danger.

There is the potential for major wars, rooted in ethnic and religious hatred. There is the chance that former adversaries will not succeed in their transition to democracy, and could become adversaries again. There is the risk that nuclear, chemical and biological weapons will fall into the wrong hands.

There is the risk of terrorist groups with increasing access to money, to technology, to sophisticated weaponry. There is the possibility that global financial vulnerabilities could overwhelm free societies.

Therefore, we cannot assume that because we are today secure and at peace we don't need military strength or alliances, or that because we are today prosperous, we are immune from turmoil half a world away.

America must still be engaged in the world, working with others to advance peace and prosperity, freedom and security, and America must remain strong. (Applause) That is what our most recent conflict in Kosovo was all about. I want to thank you profoundly for the support the VFW gave

us during the conflict there.

I know it wasn't easy for you to do. We were still in the early stages of the longest and most difficult military campaign in the 50-year history of NATO. Critics were convinced from the beginning that we could not succeed. But you stood with us and, more importantly, you stood with our men and women in uniform. NATO and the United States prevailed. We are all grateful for your support. (Applause)

Many of you in this room today fought in World War II against the tyrants who preached racial and religious superiority. In Kosovo, innocent men, women and children were systematically targeted for killing and mass expulsion by their governments simply because of their ethnic heritage or the way they chose to worship God.

After World War II, after ending the four-year war of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, NATO could not accept that kind of behavior on its own borders. It could not stand by, once again, and see people driven from their homes, loaded on railcars, having their history erased.

So, instead, the century ends with a powerful statement by NATO's 19 democracies, reaffirming human life and human dignity, giving us the chance after two world wars, the Cold War and the Balkan conflicts, for the first time ever to have an undivided, democratic and peaceful Europe. It shares our values, strengthens our economy, helps us meet our common aspirations and will not call young Americans to go there to fight and die in the 21st century. (Applause)

We prevailed in Kosovo because our cause was just, our goals were clear, our alliance were strong and our strategy worked, thanks to the performance of our men and women in uniform. In 78 days, they flew more than 37,000 support and strike sorties in the face of constant danger, including surface-to-air missiles. Many times our pilots risked their lives because they would not fire back at the Serb gunners who were positioned in heavily populated areas, and they didn't want to kill innocent civilians.

In the end, thank God we had zero combat fatalities and only two planes shot down. That is an astonishing record and a tribute to the professionalism we see every day from our military forces the world over. They are good people. (Applause)

They are good people who are well-trained, well-led and well-equipped. Rigorous training is critical — and as all of you know, dangerous in and of itself. Indeed, we must always remember our two Army airmen who died in training exercises in Albania during the Kosovo conflict.

And we thank God there weren't more casualties in Kosovo, in part because the men and women trained so hard, with the world's best equipment. As long as I am President, I intend to keep the commitment I made from the first day of our administration, that our men and women in uniform will remain the best-trained, the best-equipped, the best-prepared military in the entire world. (Applause)

All of you know we have challenges in keeping that commitment. Thanks to the strength of our economy, in part, we are having a harder time

recruiting and keeping some of our best people. And we have a lot of tough decisions to make to maintain the readiness of our equipment and to keep ahead of the latest generation in military developments. I have asked Congress for the support necessary to deal with these challenges. I believe it will be forthcoming, and I ask for your support in making sure that it is.

We also recognize another simple truth here, on your centennial: the troops of tomorrow will only be as good as our commitment to veterans today. Way back in 1903, Theodore Roosevelt said, “a man who is good enough to shed his blood for his country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards.” (Applause)

One of the great privileges I have had in being President is to work for and with our country’s veterans, and their organizations. The White House doors have been open to veterans, to help to shape policy affecting veterans — especially when it comes to critical matters like health care.

Early in our administration, Hershel Gober recommended that we look for ways to bring health care closer to veterans who needed it. Since then we have opened more than 600 outpatient clinics all across America, and have more planned over the next two years. We expect to treat 400,000 more veterans this year than last year. (Applause)

We have also confronted some long-neglected problems head-on. We have reached out to more than 40,000 veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange, to tell them about the expanded benefits available to them. I pressed hard for answers to the Gulf War Syndrome and proper care for those who suffer from it.

We are in the process of building five new national cemeteries, the most since the Civil War. And we are making a special effort to end something I know is unacceptable to all of us here today — homeless veterans. They should be brought back into the society they did so much to defend. (Applause)

In all these efforts, I want to thank Secretary West, his predecessor, Secretary Brown, and Deputy Secretary Gober and all those at the Department of Veterans Affairs that have worked so hard to reach out to you and to work with you. We know there is more to do.

As Vice President Gore announced last month, we will continue to work with the VFW and others to make sure that all veterans receive the high-quality care they deserve next year and every year, and we expect this year’s budget to reflect that commitment. (Applause)

I would like to make another point today. Standing by our military and standing by our veterans means more than simply preparing people to fight wars and taking care of them after they wear our nation’s uniform. We must also work with equal determination to prevent wars.

That means paying attention not only to military readiness, but to diplomatic readiness as well. We know that if diplomacy is not backed by real, credible threats of force, it can be empty — indeed, dangerous. But if we don’t use diplomacy first to promote our interests, if we rely on our military as the only line of defense, it almost certainly will become our only

line of defense.

Of course, international engagement costs money. But the costliest peace is far cheaper than the cheapest war. (Applause) Ever since I became President, I have been trying hard to convince Congress of that basic truth. It has been a considerable challenge.

Our international affairs programs — which fund everything from resolving conflicts to strengthening young democracies, to combatting terrorism, to fighting dangerous drugs, to promoting our exports, to maintaining our embassies all around the world — amount to less than one percent of the federal budget, and less than one-fifteenth of our defense budget.

But I regret to say that since 1985, these programs have been cut significantly. This year, the House and Senate have passed spending bills that would cut our request for international affairs by more than \$2 billion. In other words, we are cutting the very programs designed to keep our soldiers out of war in the first place.

Underfunding our arsenal of peace is as risky as underfunding our arsenal for war. For if we continue to underfund diplomacy, we will end up overusing our military. Problems we might have been able to resolve peacefully will turn into crises that we can only resolve at a cost of life and treasure. If this trend continues, there will be real consequences for important American interests.

Let me mention just a few, beginning with our interest in peace and stability across the Atlantic. Today, after the victory in Kosovo and in Bosnia, we have an opportunity to invest in peace so that future wars do not occur there.

The people of the Balkans have been crippled by conflict, really since the end of the Cold War. Today, we have a chance to integrate them with each other, and into the mainstream of Europe — where they will have strong incentives to maintain democracy and good behavior, and avoid conflict.

To do this, we don't need anything as ambitious as the Marshall Plan. And whatever is done, we must insist that our European partners carry most of the load, and that Balkan leaders themselves take responsibility for changing their policies.

Still, the United States should be a part of this process. If we don't, and the effort fails, make no mistake — there will be another bloody war that starts in the Balkans, and spreads throughout southeastern Europe. And some day, more young Americans may be asked to risk their lives at far greater cost than our part of the rebuilding of the region.

If we are to succeed in winning the peace, we may see a 21st century — I will say again — in which we do not have to send the young people of America to fight in another European war. That is a worthy objective. We have seen enough wars in Europe, claiming the lives of their children and America's young people. Now we have a chance to avoid it, and we ought to take the chance. (Applause)

We also have a responsibility to protect the American people from the dangers most likely to surface in the 21st century. The gravest of those may not be another country launching a nuclear weapon, but that weapons of mass destruction will fall into the hands of terrorists and their rogue-state sponsors.

We have worked to reduce that doomsday scenario. Since 1992, our support has helped to deactivate almost 5,000 nuclear warheads in the former Soviet Union; to eliminate nuclear weapons from three former Soviet republics; to strengthen the security of weapons and materials at over 100 sites; to tighten export controls in Russia and to purchase hundreds of tons, literally hundreds of tons, of highly enriched uranium that otherwise could be used for nuclear weapons that end up in the wrong hands.

This effort has received strong bipartisan support in the Congress for which I am very grateful. Today, the Russian economy is struggling, as we all know. The average salary of a highly-trained weapons scientist in Russia — listen to this — the average salary of a highly-trained weapons scientist in Russia is less than \$100 a month.

Now, for a small investment, we can help them turn that expertise to peaceful projects that help the world and draw a living wage doing it. Or we can do nothing, and pray that each and every one of those thousands of scientists will somehow resist the temptation to market their expertise to those who wish to do us and the cause of freedom harm. Common sense says to me that we ought to give them something useful and good to do and let them make a decent living. (Applause)

That's why, in my State of the Union Address I proposed increasing funding for threat reduction by two-thirds over the next five years. I want to work with Congress to make these investments to make the world a safer place.

Another challenge is to create a durable and comprehensive peace in the region that every president since Richard Nixon has considered among the most dangerous in the world — the Middle East. Today, we have a real opportunity to do that. The new Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, formerly the commander of all Israel's military forces, has set forth an ambitious agenda to reach agreement within the next 15 months and to move the process beyond the setbacks of recent years.

Both Israelis and Palestinians now are determined to move forward. But the enemies of peace stand ready to strike to undercut this path. That is why last fall, when the two sides made a commitment to peace at the Wye River talks, we made a commitment to them, as well.

As the United States has done ever since the Camp David Accords in the late 1970s, we told the Israelis that we would help them minimize the risks of peace and lift the lives of the Palestinian people. We told the Jordanians that we would help promote their safety and their well-being.

Now, I know that's a long way away. But you know if there's a full-scale war in the Middle East it will affect our interests and our values. The

Middle East is home to all three of the world's great religions that hold we are created by one God. We have a chance to see it become a place of peace.

If it becomes again a place of war, it will cost us far more than investing in a common, shared, peaceful future. The conflict has gone on for too long. We have a historic opportunity to end it. If the Israelis, the Palestinians, the Jordanians — ultimately, the Syrians and the Lebanese — if they all are willing to do their part, we must do ours, and we ought to begin by keeping our word to fund the Wye River peace process.

We also have an opportunity, believe it or not, to move beyond a series of cruel conflicts in Africa. In the last three weeks, in efforts led not by the United States, although we supported them, but by the African countries themselves, we have seen signs for hope in the resolution of devastating conflicts — especially in the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which has claimed more than 70,000 lives already.

We have seen the most populous country in Africa, Nigeria, hold a democratic election and bring to an end 15 years of misrule. All this is very good news. It means that the largest untapped market for our products in the world — a continent of over 700 million people, that provides nearly as much oil to us as we get from the Middle East — will now have a chance to develop in freedom and peace and shared prosperity with us and other freedom-loving people.

Now, the African countries don't want the United States to solve their problems or to deploy our military. All they have asked us to do, at a small cost, is to support their efforts to resolve conflicts on their own, to keep the peace, to build better lives for their people and to develop competent militaries.

These efforts don't make a lot of headlines. I will bet most of you don't know much about them. That's good, because the point is to avoid headlines — headlines about famine and refugee crisis and genocide — and to replace them, instead, with stories of partnership and shared prosperity. These are the stories we can write now — again, if Congress will invest only a tiny portion of what we spend on defense on avoiding war in the first place.

Finally, there is the question of the United Nations. One of the great legacies of our victory in World War II is an institution where nations seek to resolve differences with words instead of weapons. Paying our dues to that organization is a legal and a moral responsibility. It ought to be reason enough to do so.

If we fail to do so soon, the United States will actually lose its vote in the General Assembly. But obligation is not the only reason for doing this. So is opportunity. The UN helps us to mobilize the support of other nations for goals Americans cherish — from keeping the peace to immunizing children to caring for refugees to combatting the spread of deadly weapons. We have been working with growing success to make sure that the UN operates better, at lower cost.

But we have to do our part. Unless we want America to pay all the costs and take all the risks to solve the world's big problems, we have to work with others — and that means paying our fair share of dues, like every other country does, to the United Nations.

The bottom line is this: today we have a unique opportunity, and a real responsibility, to advance the values in the world won in the 20th century, over the last 100 years by America's veterans. But if we have only one arrow in our quiver — our military — we sacrifice the work of peace and increase the risk of war. We have to do our part to keep the world on a stable path toward democracy — the democracy that every single one of you put your lives on the line to defend.

That's how President Truman felt. Fifty years ago this week, he spoke to you at the VFW's Golden Jubilee convention. Listen to what he said — and you can feel it here, because we are not far from his hometown. Harry Truman said, "Peace with freedom and justice cannot be bought cheaply. It can only be assured by the combined efforts of the multitudes of people throughout the world who want a secure peace. We must keep them our friends if the world is to be a decent place for our children and their grandchildren to live." Harry Truman was a pretty smart fellow. (Applause)

Just two months ago, I visited a refugee camp full of Kosovans, Albanians in Macedonia. I wish every one of you could have been there. As I walked through the camp, these young children started chanting spontaneously: U-S-A, U-S-A, U-S-A — thanking Americans for giving them a chance to reclaim their lives in their native land. They have all gone home now, by the way, over 90 percent of the refugees from Kosovo are home. (Applause)

But it reminded me of my trip to Normandy for the 50th anniversary of D-Day, in 1994. In Normandy, we all heard stories from our veterans of French citizens who came up to them, took their hands and told them that they were very young, 50 years ago, but they would always remember what Americans did for them and what it meant to them.

I hope that in 50 years, some of our veterans from the conflict in Kosovo will go back there, and the children from that refugee camp, who will then be in their middle years, will take their hands and say, 50 years ago I was chanting, "U-S-A, U-S-A," with my voice, but I still chant with my heart. We are very grateful to all of you.

So on this centennial anniversary, on behalf of a grateful nation and grateful people throughout the world, I say to every soldier, sailor, airman, Marine and Coast Guardsman, to every man and woman who fought bravely for our nation and brought dignity to the world, thank you for a job well done. May we look forward to a century in which all your sacrifice and all your service is honored and redeemed with the greatest peace and prosperity the world has ever known.

Thank you and God bless you. (Applause)

CLOSING CEREMONIES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you all for attending this Joint Opening Session. I know we will have a great convention. Please remain standing for the Benediction by our National Chaplain Father Thomas W. Neville.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Neville gave the Benediction at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Join me in a Salute to the Colors. Present arms, order arms.

(Whereupon, the assembly gave the Salute to the Colors.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: I declare this Joint Opening Session closed.

(Whereupon, the meeting was recessed at 11:50 o'clock a.m.)

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION
TUESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 17, 1999

(The First Business Session of the 100th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, was called to order in the H. Roe Bartle Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri, at 8:00 o'clock a.m., by Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, please take your seats. Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, perform the Opening Ceremonies.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Yes, sir. All rise and uncover, parade rest.

(Whereupon, National Sergeant-at-Arms Barry Hoffman led the Convention in the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance, and National Chaplain Thomas Neville gave the Opening Prayer from the Ritual.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Opening Ceremonies for today's business session have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, I will open the First Business Session of our 100th National Convention. To begin our meeting, I will ask the Chairman of the Credentials Committee to give his report.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Richard Trombla, Post 1174, Kansas. This is a temporary report of the Credentials Committee.

The total registered delegates, 12,936. Department Commanders, 39. Past Commanders-in-Chief, 31; National Officers, 38. That is for a grand total of 13,044.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, this is a temporary report of the committee.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: At this time we will hear from the Committee on Convention Rules. The Chairman is Past Commander-in-Chief Cooper T. Holt.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CLIFFORD HOLT: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. First of all, I would like to thank you for appointing me as Chairman for the Convention Rules Committee, and I want to let you know I have enjoyed this time very much. I want to thank you for appointing as Vice-Chairman Wayne Thompson, from the great state of

Colorado. He did an outstanding job for you.

As indicated, I will give you the Report of the Committee on Convention Rules just as soon as I get this staple out of here. This is to the 100th National Convention, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 17th day of August, 1999.

Your Committee on Convention Rules met Sunday afternoon, August 15, and agreed on the following recommendations, which are respectfully submitted for your consideration.

Commander-in-Chief, with your permission, I will ask that the Vice-Chairman, Past Department Commander and Judge Advocate, Wayne Thompson, from Colorado, to read the first nine proposed rules of this convention. Then I will read the remaining proposed ten rules of this convention.

Comrade Thompson.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Good morning, comrades. I will read the first nine proposed rules to you at this time.

1. That, with exceptions noted below, Demeter's Manual be recognized as parliamentary authority for this Convention.
2. That when a registered delegate desires to make a motion or address the Convention, he shall rise, address the Chair as "Comrade Commander-in-Chief", and after being recognized, shall state his name, Post number and Department, before proceeding.
3. A registered delegate shall be permitted to speak but twice on any one subject, or any pending resolution for a period of eight minutes each, except by consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of the Convention present; provided, that chairmen of Convention Committees may speak as frequently as necessary in connection with reports of their committees; and in the event of controversy, the presiding officer shall not entertain any motion which will curtail further debate without affording the maker of the motion or a member of the particular group presenting the resolution an opportunity for five minutes of final rebuttal.
4. All resolutions offered by individual registered delegates must bear the endorsement of the Department Commander or in his absence the Department Adjutant. All resolutions must be submitted to the office of the Adjutant General for numbering and referral to committee no later than 9:00 a.m. Thursday, August 19, 1999, and must be accompanied by a written explanation as to why the resolution was not presented to the Department Commander for consideration.
5. All resolutions offered on the floor at the Convention, or otherwise, shall be in writing and shall automatically, and without reading, be referred to the Adjutant General for

assignment to the proper committee.

6. Committee chairmen, in reporting on resolutions referred to their committee, shall first read those resolutions on which favorable action is recommended. Specific resolutions shall be set aside for individual action at the request of any delegate, the others being voted upon collectively.

After action has been taken on all such resolutions, the chairman shall read the number and title of those resolutions which the committee has disapproved. A resolution disapproved by the committee shall be automatically rejected unless a motion is made and seconded that it be approved, in which case it shall be brought up for debate and Convention action.

7. This Convention will not consider any resolution dealing with race, creed or religion, or endorse anyone for public office. This Convention will not consider any resolution calling for the expenditure or appropriation of organization funds.
8. This Convention will not consider any resolution endorsing legislation sponsored by any other veterans organization, or requesting us to join with any other organization in sponsoring legislation not expressly proposed by the Veterans of Foreign of the United States.
9. No person not a duly registered delegate or member of the National Convention shall participate in debate, directly or indirectly, on any subject before the Convention.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOLT: Thank you, Wayne.

I will read the following rules:

10. Unit rule of voting shall not be allowed in this Convention.
11. Voting strength shall be determined as those delegates registered as of the close of the credentials registration booth the previous day and as reported by the Credentials Committee each morning.

The Department Commanders will receive, prior to the beginning of each Business Session, a list of Posts that have properly registered delegates. Only delegates representing those Posts listed on the report will be accorded voting privileges.

12. On roll call votes, the Chairman or acting Chairman of each delegation shall poll his delegation's registered delegates on the floor and shall announce the vote of his delegation.
13. Registered delegates of a delegation may arrive at a vote in any manner they see fit, but shall announce it in terms of full units and not in terms of a fractional part of a vote.
14. Reconsideration of a motion or resolution upon which final disposition has been made shall not be allowed after the session at which it was acted on has been recessed unless the

body is notified of such contemplated action prior to the close of that session.

15. When the report of the chairman of the delegation is not acceptable to all registered delegates of the delegation and a poll of the Department registered delegates is demanded by three registered delegates of said Department, the Adjutant General shall poll the registered delegates, without discussion or question.
16. Voting shall be by acclamation, except when a roll call be demanded by ten registered delegates representing Posts in ten separate Departments.
17. Nominating speeches for the National Officers shall be limited to five minutes each. Not more than two seconding speeches shall be made for any candidate and such speeches shall not exceed two minutes each. Nomination and election of National Officers will be held according to the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, and Manual of Procedure, Article VI, Section 609.
18. Registered delegates and persons recognized by the Chair shall be entitled to a respectful hearing and the Chair shall have the authority to clear the gallery or the floor or have the Sergeant-at-Arms escort from the floor any person or persons who may create any disturbances which interfere with the orderly procedure of the Convention.
19. Consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of the Convention present is necessary for suspension of the rules of this Convention.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move the adoption of the rules recommended by the Committee on Convention Rules and as presented to this convention.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: There is a motion on the floor. Is there a second?

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, you have heard the motion to accept the Convention Rules that have been read. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, I will call for the question. All in favor will say "aye"; all opposed. The motion carries.

At this time I will express my sincere thanks and will dismiss the Convention Rules Committee and thank the chairman and the committee for their hard work.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: For the Report of the Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual, I call on

the Chairman, Past Commander-in-Chief John Stang.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STANG: Commander-in Chief, members of the convention, I would ask that the members of the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure Committee please rise and be recognized. Thank you.

Now, I will ask the Vice-Chairman of this committee, Norman K. Mead from Arizona, to please rise. On behalf of the entire committee, Commander-in-Chief, we thank you for appointing us to what we consider a rather important committee.

I would also like to mention the names of the National By-Laws and Review Committee, who worked with these various requests for amendments to the By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual throughout the year. They are Ed Burnham, Frank Zinzer, Glen Gardner, Jr., William Cox, William Hawk, Lester G. Horton, George K. Mead, who is Chairman of that Review Committee, and Dale Vaughn. I would appreciate your applause in recognizing them for their hard work throughout the year.

The committee thanks Adjutant General John Senk, Jr., Assistant Adjutant General Larry LeFebvre, Assistant Quartermaster General Larry Maher and Director of Post Services, James Rowoldt, and our Judge Advocate General E. Earl Lord for their assistance in our deliberations.

This is the form that we will follow to report to this convention floor the deliberations of the committees. In making the report of the committee, I am going to follow the following procedure: As Chairman, I will read the list of those proposed amendments to the By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual, which the committee recommends to be adopted and move the adoption of those amendments.

After that motion and a second, the chair will ask if there are any of those amendments which the comrades want set aside for debate. Note will be made of those amendments to be set aside and a vote will then be taken on those amendments which have not been set aside.

After the vote on those amendments, which were not set aside, we will take up those proposed amendments which have been set aside for debate. They will be taken up in the order in which they have been set aside and each proposed amendment will be voted on by the convention as a motion to adopt the proposed amendment.

After action is completed on the proposed amendments recommended for adoption, I will read the list of those proposed amendments to which the Committee's recommendation is rejection. After the list is read, you will have an opportunity to move the adoption of any of those proposed amendments. Each motion will be taken up and disposed of in order.

If no motion is made by any comrade with respect to a specific amendment, the amendment is, under our Convention Rules, automatically rejected by the convention. To make it hopefully easier for all of us to follow, including me, we are going to do the By-Law Section first. We will then go into the Manual of Procedure proposed amendments, and after that

the Ritual.

We are starting now with the By-Laws amendments, proposed amendments, which are recommended for approval by the committee.

They are B-1, Consolidation of Posts.

B-2, Council of Administration - Composition, Powers and Duties.

B-3, National Committees.

B-4, National Committees.

B-5, Politics.

B-7, Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

B-13, Definitions.

I move the adoption of the recommendation of the committee for those aforementioned by-laws.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The chair recognizes Microphone No. 3. This will be Microphone No. 1, the center aisle Microphone No. 2 and to my right will be Microphone No. 3. The chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE AL JONES (Department of Pennsylvania): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Al Jones, a member of the By-Laws Committee from Pennsylvania, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion on the proposed motion to adopt B-1, B-2, B-3, B-4, B-5, B-7 and B-13, Proposed By-Laws Amendments? Is there any discussion? Hearing no discussion, I will move the question. All in favor will say "aye"; all opposed. The "ayes" have it. Those Proposed National By-Laws Amendments have been adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STANG: Those Proposed Amendments to the By-Laws, which the committee recommends rejection, are as follows:

B-6, Arrearages; B-8, Officers, Powers and Duties; B-9, Regional National Council of Administration Members - How Elected; B-10, Regional National Council of Administration Members - How Elected; B-11, Control of Units; B-12, Buddy Poppy.

COMRADE WILLIAM RADIGAN (Post 3061 - South Dakota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE WILLIAM RADIGAN (Post 3061 - South Dakota): I request that B-11 be set aside for individual consideration.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: At this time, as a matter of procedure, what you will need to do is to move the adoption of B-11.

COMRADE WILLIAM RADIGAN (Post 3061 - South Dakota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move adoption of B-11.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: There is a motion. Is there a second?

COMRADE BILL CERNEY (Post 9950 - South Dakota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have a motion and a second to adopt B-11. Is there any discussion?

The chair recognizes Microphone 3.

COMRADE WILLIAM RADIGAN (Post 3061 - South Dakota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Delegates to this Convention, I rise this morning to ask you to pass this by-law change. I do that with full knowledge that the National Organization does not feel it is good for us as an organization to adopt this change. However, I would like to explain our reasons for bringing it before you this morning and ask that you give us your individual, collective consideration, which we think is a very important by-law change.

I come from a small state. We only have 720,000 in our entire state. If we take the City of Sioux Falls out of it, we only have 600,000 people. We have 73 VFW Posts and over 16,000 members. We have reached a place where it is necessary for us to reconsider the operations of canteens and pub rooms.

What B-11 does is allow the VFW Posts to join with the Post of another veterans organization and operate a canteen or a club room. Our reasons are many, but we will keep it brief. Many times in our towns, the same individuals or a high percentage of them belong to both the VFW and some other organization's post. They are basically the same people.

Those towns cannot support two club rooms or two canteen operations, but they can support one. By supporting one, they can provide a place for the comrades, the veterans of that community, to gather together and make their plans for the good of those in that community, provide for their community service projects and youth activities, and all those various things that all of us do.

I come before you this morning and ask that you give consideration to letting it be possible, that in towns where there is simply not the financial ability to support two canteens, and yet for those veterans who wish to gather together in a mutual place and only have the cost of one building, the cost of one set of operational costs, one set of payment of wages in operating a canteen.

They simply cannot provide for two, but they can provide for one and it will work. I know the National Organization has had some sad experiences with this, but this is our 100th Anniversary. It is time for change, and we all know that change is coming.

We are going to be in a different era, and those of us from South Dakota, we ask that you seriously consider what we are asking here this morning and that is that you let our VFW Posts join with Posts from other organizations, veterans organizations, and veterans organizations only, to operate canteens and Posts, club rooms, so that they can have a place to do the things they need to do.

We feel it would be a good thing for the community to have this sort of thing and we also think that it would be a disadvantage to put all of the veterans' Posts in those towns at a disadvantage where they cannot

operate a canteen. Comrades and delegates, I ask that you join with us in South Dakota and give this serious consideration.

We ask that you pass B-11 and give it a chance and let the National Organization put the covenants and rules they want to put on it once we adopt it. Let's get on and let's move forward. We appreciate your support. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, Comrade Radigan.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Comrades, I ask for a "no" vote on this motion and that we reject the proposed change. I have served many years as State Judge Advocate for the Department of Colorado and I have served as your Judge Advocate General.

The by-law, as it stands now, is what we should have. The Department of Colorado, we have had problems with this type of organization. Almost every one that we have in existence has been a problem. We are involved in litigation in one of them now, and our comrades of good will from the DAV, the American Legion, Am-Vets and ourselves, our own comrades, they were well-intended when they formed these organizations years ago, but for some reason that comradeship has either been dissolved or been broken and we end up in disputes that we cannot solve amicably, and it creates problems.

Frankly, if it was up to me, I would ask that all existing organizations be abolished. We have five in our state that are grandfathered in and every one of them has been a problem for us, including one in litigation now. We cannot solve it.

Let's not create more problems by allowing the formation of these multi-party organizations that control our property, our canteens, our clubs, et cetera. I ask for a "no" vote on this.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

I am looking at Microphone No. 1. Is there anyone at Microphone No. 1 that would like to discuss B-11? There is no one.

Back to Microphone No. 3, the chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DAVID WARE (Post 7480 - Washington): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am David Ware, Post 7480, Davenport, Washington. I agree with the other comrade. I just don't understand, since when did the canteens start running the Posts? We must stay separate.

We have the same problem in a couple of our little cities in Washington where the other service organizations have tried to move in on our canteens and run that. We are not in litigation, thank goodness. I don't think we will be, but we need to have this amendment thrown out. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WILLIAM CHAMPAGNE (Post 1698 - New

Hampshire): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise in opposition to this motion. Comrades, we have had personal experience of having something happen like that in our state, where the Post merged with other veterans organizations into this one building, and what happened was it diluted that Post so much that it just disappeared. We are still fighting to get it back. They would rather drink than to do our programs. We lost one of our Posts. That's all. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade. Is there anyone at Microphone No. 1? For purposes of summary and summation on this motion, the chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WILLIAM HIGGINS (Post 2544 - Texas): Commander-in-Chief and fellow delegates, we are for it, and we think that it should be left up to the individual groups. That doesn't mean that just because we pass the resolution that every Post has to join right away with another veterans organization.

It should be left up to the individuals, and I think a good leadership will make it easy, and we should not have any problems. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade. Any other discussion?

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Glen Gardner, a delegate from Post 3359, Garland, Texas. I stand in opposition to this proposed By-Law change. I think there are other sections of 709 that this would cause us to violate.

By-Law 709 says all assets of any activity should be under the control of the Quartermaster General. If you did this and a dual operation with the American Legion and the VFW, then you will have to fight who is controlling the funds. All this does is create problems.

It will create more instances where we will have Posts in the future where we will have to have a dispute over who owns the building, who doesn't own the building, and the VFW will be left out in the cold. I think we should defeat this proposed by-law change. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Microphone No. 1, and then we will summarize at Microphone No. 3.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE KEN RODGERS (Post 6925 - Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I speak in favor of what the comrade has said. If we allow other divisions of the veterans organizations to use our canteen, I don't know how they would divvy up the money. Somebody will get more than the others. You will have chaos between all of these organizations. That is what will happen.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

For purposes of summation, the chair recognizes Microphone No.

3.

COMRADE WILLIAM RADIGAN (Post 3061 - South Dakota): I

come before you today and ask that you pass this by-law change. None of us can live in the past. We have to live in the future. Because this has not worked in time and specific places in the past does not necessarily mean that it will not work in the future.

I have confidence in our Post officers. I have confidence in our Post members that they have the ability to make the decision of what is good for their Posts and what will work and what will not. There may be mistakes now and then, but basically I feel that those people have the capability to make the decision to do the administration and carry out the work that is necessary to provide for this type of operation.

I guarantee you, sir, that we cannot go back. I once took an accounting course, and I will never forget it. It said the past is a cancelled check; the future is a promissory note, and today is all the cash on hand that we have. And I ask you, comrades, let's act on today and forget yesterday and look forward to tomorrow. I ask you pass B-11.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade. Are you ready for the vote? There is a motion on the floor to adopt B-11, Proposed By-Law Amendment, Control of Units, Section 709. All those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed. The motion to adopt is defeated.

Is there any other motion to adopt?

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE GEORGE BERTHIAUME (Post 969 - Washington): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, at this time I move we adopt Proposed By-Law Amendment B-9.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: There is a motion to adopt B-9. Is there a second?

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DAVID WARE (Post 7480 - Washington): I second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: There has been a motion and a second to adopt B-9. B-9 will amend Section 617, Regional National Council of Administration Members - How Elected.

For purposes of a discussion, the chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE GEORGE BERTHIAUME (Post 969 - Washington): Commander-in-Chief, I am the individual that actually penned this resolution. However, there is no way I can possibly take credit for it. There was input and we sought insight from just virtually every Conference.

I know probably half the people up there this morning I have spoken to in the past before this was put together. This is not a short thought-out thing. It was done in-depth. I was unable to speak at the By-Laws Committee meeting. I wasn't able to express to them some of the points that probably should have been brought across at that time.

At this time I would like to make you aware of the resolution. Apparently the membership there was some type of power thing to reshuffle the Council, and bring things up, and that is simply not the case whatsoever. This resolution is strictly about bringing a voice back to the

membership on the Council of Administration, where there are some shortages.

To begin with, there are presently 19 Departments on the Council of Administration, where we have three Departments or more represented by only one Council member. This proposal will reduce that down to only three versus nineteen, by adding only three Council members.

It places the Department of Latin America in with Europe together, so that we will always have a voice for those Departments that are on foreign soil by virtue of the fact they have interests that will be somewhat different than the Departments within the Continental United States. It puts all the Council members in their own area.

Some of you may not be aware of that. For example, Saturday morning at the Big Ten Conference, Nebraska and South Dakota had no Council member there. Nebraska shares its Council member with Kansas, and Kansas happens to be in the Western Conference. South Dakota shares its Council member with Wyoming and North Dakota, and it didn't have a representative because their Council member from North Dakota was in the Western Conference. This resolves that issue.

What it does, as far as the rest of the structure, if people are concerned about as far as Council members' representation, what it does, it places the Eastern Conference and the Southern Conference, that are approximately equal in size, and it gives them each a Council member, which I think is pretty fair spread since they are almost identical.

Presently the Eastern Conference only has seven and it would give them eight. It also would give the Big Ten Conference a solid seven Council members. This year they only have six and they are the largest Conference of the four. The second to the smallest has eight, two more than the Big Ten.

If they are concerned about a power play, it doesn't do that. It just evens things out. What it will also do, as far as the cost to the National Organization, presently there are five Council members that are traveling with two other Departments twice a year, for the National and State Conventions. That is four trips a year.

If this passes, they would be required only to travel to one state, which would reduce it to two trips a year and then if they do go back for the Council of Administration, that is there. So, financially it is a savings to the National Organization, of course, which is a savings to the membership.

I realize that it is virtually impossible to put together anything that is absolutely perfect. I mean, that can't be done. In talking with many of the comrades from all the conferences, this seems to be the most fair and equitable to all the membership and puts our National Organization, as it wants to be, a grassroots organization with the membership that can speak to the national officers and let them know how those Departments feel.

In closing, just let me say that as the author of this resolution, I would ask the privilege of final rebuttal.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: That is granted, comrade.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DAN CROSSLEY (Post 3586 - Utah): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am talking in favor of passing B-9. I believe it is the right thing to do. I think it is the equitable thing to do, too. Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE TOM SANKO (Post 6040 - Kansas): I rise in support of B-9. I have reflected on what Corky talked about. This is not a power play. This is an equity representation. We have had a lot of discussion about how many members would be on the Council from the different Conferences.

I just want to remind the floor that we don't vote by Conference but by individual Departments. The equity in this particular resolution is the distance in representation. As Corky well stated and I won't repeat it, distance means a lot to us in the western part of the United States, because it is a long ways between Department conventions sometimes.

This resolution, granted, is not perfect. I can't say that the current system is broken, but it could stand a little fixing. This is a fix in the right direction for the makeup of the Council of Administration, realizing, of course, that the Conferences are not recognized by our National By-Laws, they are planned.

They have got to be considered in the assignments of the Council of Administration. I would like to say B-9 is the fair thing to do. It is not unfair for anyone. It makes the current representation on the Council and the distance traveled by those Council members a more fair and equitable thing. I ask your support for B-9.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I stand in opposition to this by-law and in support of the By-Laws Review Committee. As the comrade said, there isn't any fair and equitable way to assign Council members throughout this United States.

However, under this proposal, you would end up with the Departments with 9,000, 8,000, 12,000 members combined with their own Council member, while at the same time you have Indiana and Missouri with 110,000 total membership with only one Councilman. You would have New Jersey and Maryland with 100,000 and one Councilman.

At the same time, you would also add two Council seats to the Western Conference with 22 percent of the membership, and they would have more Council seats than the Big Ten Conference, which has 32-percent membership. I think the Council situation as we have today is the best we can have under the current situation. I don't think this change is the way to do it, and I ask that we oppose this Proposed By-Law change. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LARRY RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, Larry Rivers, a delegate from VFW Post 1736, Alexandria, Louisiana. I rise in opposition to this by-law. I would like to have the opportunity to state the reasons. If we have a roll call vote here today, the states like Pennsylvania, New York, Texas and Florida and others that have the largest membership base, always have the most number of votes.

That is the way it has been in my understanding of the VFW in our 100-year history. If, in fact, we need more Council members, we probably need to consider giving Pennsylvania two or three more because of that large membership, not diluting it where you have fewer members represented by a Council member.

We are like the House of Representatives, not like the U.S. Senate. In the U.S. Senate, everybody gets two Senators regardless of size. In the VFW, you vote based on your strength. We give a Council member to Departments over 75,000.

Perhaps we need to consider redividing the Council members based on that proportion. But to say that the second most important body behind the National Convention that always votes based on membership strength should be voted based on something else just doesn't make any sense.

To say that the Departments are not representative is not true. Let's understand what is at stake here is where the Council member comes from, the state he comes from or she comes from, not whether or not they do a good job representing their Departments.

My experience has been that they do an excellent job. To say you are not represented because that member is not from your state every two years is simply wrong. I believe we are philosophically sound the way we have run the organization over the past years and I would urge my fellow delegates to vote against this resolution and to maintain the integrity of our Council of Administration.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade. Anybody else on the question?

For the purpose of summation, the chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE GEORGE BERTHIAUME (Post 969 - Washington): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I can understand the feelings of Comrade Gardner, but believe me I feel his pain. I can tell you right now when you talk inequities as he is, you are talking about the structure. When this was built, I looked at that, and I could have taken a large Department like ours and placed it with a smaller one and try to balance it out, so they all averaged around 30,000.

But for logistic reasons, it didn't make any sense to take a Department with 35,000 or 36,000 and put it with a Department, let's say, of 5,000, where he has got to travel an additional 1,000 miles to get there, when there were two side by side.

So what this did was in some cases we took two large Departments that their combined membership was over 50,000, and put those together, and then took two smaller ones. That is for logistic reasons and no other cause. As far as the two Council members that were mentioned, increased in the Western Conference, let me explain to you exactly the way it is today.

Today, as we stand here, the Western Conference has seven Council members. We are the smallest. The second smallest conference, the Southern Conference, has eight Council members. Excuse me, the Big Ten, which is the largest conference, which they are talking about the inequities, they only have six. Under this by-laws change, they would have seven.

The inequity would be one Council member, not two as it stands today. This actually helps them. It seems to be a misinterpretation here. As far as inequities, I can just quickly tell you that the Department of Washington right now has 18 Departments smaller than that and only have to share with one another. Colorado is ten, Arizona is nine. I can continue on but the number goes higher than there are Departments. The inequities are just beyond understanding.

As a matter of fact, your own Department would share with two others. There are two Departments out there smaller than yours that don't have to do that. This touches the whole corners of this organization. It is not about power as some seem to present it. This is strictly about having a voice.

I can assure you that there are Departments out there that are saying give me a Council member, give me a vote, just so we can have the privilege of a voice, I can tell you. And last year our Council member was ill and not here. That meant that three Departments had no vote and no voice on the Council of Administration. This would not eliminate it, but it would soften it. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade. At this time, comrades, I will move the question. There has been a motion to adopt B-9 Proposed By-Law Amendment, which would amend Section 617, National Council of Administration Members -How Elected.

All those in favor of the motion will say "aye"; all of those opposed "no". It takes a two-thirds majority to amend the by-laws. The chair is not in doubt. There was not a two-thirds majority. The motion does not carry.

Comrades, at this time we have some guests here who are to receive a National Citation so I will declare a recess in the Proposed By-Law changes at this time and will take them up again immediately after we make these two presentations.

PRESENTATION OF VFW JAMES E. VAN ZANDT CITIZENSHIP AWARD,
GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO PFIZER PHARMACEUTICAL
COMPANY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Throughout its 150 years of

existence, Pfizer Pharmaceutical has worked to develop and distribute medicines for the betterment of mankind. Equally important, Pfizer has learned to appreciate the lifeline of its organization, customers, folks like you and me.

Pfizer has a unique and proud heritage, dedicated to helping people live healthier and better lives.

In demonstrating its civic responsibility, Pfizer spends close to \$2.5 billion annually on research and development in a wide range of challenging medical fields, including anxiety, arthritis, asthma, cancer, diabetes, infections, migraine, obesity, osteoporosis, pain, and stroke, among other illnesses and conditions.

By showing appreciation to the men and women who served in the armed forces, Pfizer has contributed free medical resources and consultation in addressing the health-care needs of veterans all over America. They have made a social commitment to ensure all veterans receive proper medical treatment and health care.

The recent formation of Pfizer's partnership with the VFW to promote health education among our members is but another example of this commitment to serving the community. The launching of the collaborative effort between Pfizer and the VFW at this convention, the "Together We Stand" project, will enable this education effort to be implemented through our VFW Posts.

In consideration of these efforts, we are pleased to present the VFW James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award to the Pfizer Corporation. Receiving this award for Pfizer is William E. Pelton, Group Vice-President of Sales. Please join me in a very warm VFW welcome for Mr. Pelton.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Citation we will present reads as follows:

"James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award, Gold Medal and this Citation presented to Pfizer Pharmaceutical Company.

"In recognition of its many contributions in providing medical resources and consultation addressing the health-care needs of veterans, thus demonstrating a high standard of corporate responsibility. For over a century and a half Pfizer Pharmaceutical has been the vanguard in the discovery and development of innovative medicines and quality health-care products and services.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 17th day of August, 1999. Approved by the National Council of Administration." It has been signed by Thomas A. Pouliot, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - WILLIAM E. PELTON

MR. PELTON: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Pouliot and members of the VFW. I am honored to accept this award on behalf of the

47,000 Pfizer employees around the world, thousands of which are members of the U.S. military. Indeed, we at Pfizer are very grateful that the VFW values our community work and our support of veterans and our focus on research and development.

This year marks the 100th Anniversary of the VFW, Pfizer is also celebrating an anniversary, our 150th. On behalf of Pfizer in this year of anniversaries, I would like to applaud the efforts of the VFW to increase awareness of the sacrifices made by American veterans and to facilitate aid for veterans and their families in the need of medical rehabilitative, educational and employment services.

One hundred fifty years ago, Charles Pfizer and Charles Earhart immigrated from Germany to the United States where they started a fine chemical company called Charles Pfizer Company. The story of Pfizer is, in fact, the story of the American dream. Those two men had pioneering experience, experience that continues to invigorate our company to this day.

They have helped to make Pfizer the world's premier pharmaceutical research company. In the mid-1940s, Pfizer became very closely aligned with your interests at the time our government was desperate to provide more rapid and effective health care for our men and women in uniform.

A few years ago, Alexander Fleming had discovered the germ killing property of penicillin. By the time we entered World War II, data clearly showed the potential for penicillin to treat infections. But producing sufficient volumes of medicine was problematic.

A little more than a beaker could be manufactured at any one time. That prompted our government to appeal to companies to enter the race to develop a process for mass production of penicillin in a pure form usable for people. Pfizer answered the call and became one of three companies that developed such a process and it turns out Pfizer's process proved so successful that the government authorized other companies to use our technique.

Although we happily share our progress with competitors, we, nonetheless, were the leading producers ourselves. Indeed, Pfizer produced 90 percent of the penicillin that went ashore to Allied Forces in Normandy on D-Day and more than half of all the penicillin used by the allies for the rest of the war to help save countless lives.

Since that time, Pfizer has grown from a chemical manufacturer to a research-based pharmaceutical company. Today our research covers virtually every disease category. Our innovative medicines treat such diverse conditions as high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, Alzheimer's, depression, arthritis, as well as infectious diseases.

Of course, last year we launched the most famous medicine in history, Viagra. Viagra is the modern medicine breakthrough for the safe and effective treatment of erectile dysfunction available, and one-third of the cost of injectable medicine. It is making a tremendous difference in the

lives of patients who suffer with ED, as well as their partners. That is really an important work we do, helping our patients.

People in need are the driving force behind our commitment to discover and develop new medicines, continue fighting the limitations of the human body. Today we have more than seventy new compounds in development, medicines in the future that may well change the way we treat dozens of health diseases.

Since it has cost over \$500 million and years and years to bring these medicines to patients, Pfizer this year alone invested over \$208 million in research and development. This research at Pfizer and elsewhere, research-based industries is crucial for our health care.

It represents the world's best opportunity to find new treatments to control the cost of health care by reducing our expenditures for surgery, hospitalizations and other therapies. In all that we do, quality is our watch word. We are constantly striving to develop products and services that improve the quality of health care that all patients receive.

To that end, I am pleased to inform you tomorrow we will be announcing an innovative new program called "Together We Stand", a new patient program on men's health issues that is being offered in collaboration with the VFW. We are very proud of that program and we are very proud of this award.

My thanks comes to you with a cautionary message. While we and other research pharmaceutical companies have great medicines in development, those new medicines will be useless unless you have access to them. We are committed to making sure that you have access to all medications you need.

We will be particularly vigilant in this area as our national discussions continue on how to expand access to pharmaceuticals. Ladies and gentlemen, let me put it this way. There is some peculiar irony in the current state of health care for veterans, which I was reminded about while I was watching last year's World War II epic, "Saving Private Ryan."

Our country that searches for Private Ryan finds him, brings him home, gives him a special loan to build a house to start a home, to communicate with the community; to give them the G.I. Bill, to expand your education, to expand your capabilities, cannot submit him to a health-care system based on limiting his choice of medicine and medical treatment.

You are entitled to the finest this country has to offer. Your health-care premiums, ladies and gentlemen, were paid for on the beaches of Normandy, at the 38th Parallel in Korea, the Mekong Delta and on the deserts in Iraq and Kuwait. You deserve the best. I assure you that the best in health care is yet to come.

So let me end as I began. Thank you again for honoring Pfizer with the James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award. As we have done in the past, we will continue to strive to meet its high standards. I thank you very, very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, I would like to announce that tomorrow morning we will begin the business session at 8:00 a.m. This is for the purpose of ensuring that we get all of our business done on Wednesday and Thursday so that Friday we can begin immediately with the election of officers. So tomorrow the business session will begin at 8:00 a.m.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER BOND, U.S. SENATE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, we have with us this morning U.S. Senator Christopher Samuel "Kit" Bond, a six-generation Missourian and a long-standing advocate for children.

Senator Bond was re-elected to a third term in the U.S. Senate in 1998. Throughout his tenure as a U.S. Senator, Bond has won legislative victories fighting for education reform and children's issues, bringing tax relief to working families, working for a balanced budget, combating juvenile crime, and championing the causes of small businesses.

Bond was also the lead Republican responsible for the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act, which ensures that workers will not have to choose between attending to family responsibilities and their jobs.

As a member of the Budget Committee and the Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee, Bond played a key role in restoring fiscal sanity to the United States Government through passage of the first balanced budget in a generation in 1997, and holding the line on spending in subsequent years.

Let us give a warm VFW welcome to Missouri's own Senator Kit Bond.

REMARKS - SENATOR CHRISTOPHER BOND

SENATOR BOND: Good morning, Commander Pouliot, Distinguished Head Table Officials, Members of the VFW, Guests and Friends:

It is a great honor to welcome you to the State of Missouri, and I join with others who here said how pleased we are that you have chosen Missouri for your 100th Anniversary celebration. Now having been arm twisted by Commander Bob Newell and the other leaders of the Missouri VFW, who explained to me in painful detail what they need out of the Appropriations Committee, I can understand why their persuasiveness may have brought you to the State of Missouri.

We hope that you enjoy it and all there is to see in Kansas City but, with no small amount of pride, I will tell you it is the best barbecue you will find anywhere, and I challenge you to test it to see if you can beat it. We have wonderful weather. It is all just comfortable here — well, I will strike that. I am from the federal government.

Anyhow, there is a little rain and I am sorry about that. I think I saw some of you who may have seen the Chiefs and the Titans on Sunday night. We are very, very proud of them, the Chiefs and our Royals and many others.

President Harry Truman once said to a group of Marine soldiers to whom he was presenting the Congressional Medal of Honor: "We are not a warlike nation. We do not go to war for gain or territory; we go to war for principles. I would rather have the Congressional Medal of Honor than to be President of the United States." He understood that those who put their lives on the line for the lives of freedom and their countrymen have respect and honor of the highest order.

I share the President's sentiments, but I have never served in war. I have tremendous respect and gratitude for those like you who have. We live in the greatest most blessed nation in the world. We enjoy the greatest freedoms of speech, association and religion. And we know that these freedoms were purchased and protected at a very high cost.

I would guess, though, that many people outside the room today are not thinking about preserving and protecting our country's freedom, they are simply enjoying them. Paradoxically, it was the blood of young sailors and soldiers, like you, that was shed in foreign lands that allows the rest of America to enjoy the lazy days of August with little thought to the sacrifices that you have others made.

So while most of America spends the last few weeks of summer barbecuing, going to the lakes and shores, and back to school sales, let us remember the thousands of men and women who are right now deployed to more than 100 areas around the world defending the same ideals that you defended.

Despite the end of the Cold War, the world remains a dangerous place. We need to look no further than Slobodan Milosevic and Saddam Hussein to understand that, and it is still the commitment of our brave men and women in uniform that keeps us safe. We must preserve our military forces superiority over all potential adversaries.

Several years ago, my good friend, Senator Dan Inouye of Hawaii said it best. He and I were defending the defense budget against a proposed significant cut. Somebody on the other side said, "Oh, well, we can cut this and still be as good as anybody else in the world." Senator Inouye said, "I never want to send American fighting men and women into a fair fight. I want them to be so much better equipped, so much better trained, so much better prepared that they have every margin of victory and the greatest chance of coming home alive after having accomplished their missions."

To me, that sums it up. We don't want to be just equal, we want to be clearly superior. The United States is home to the best trained, the best motivated and best military men and women. The United States possesses the most advanced and sophisticated defense industry in the world.

It is crucial to our national security now and it will be crucial in the

next century. Our defense industry base also today functions as a testing bed for new technology. This canon is being used for civilian applications that employs hundreds of thousands of people with vital skills, and high quality and high-paying jobs.

Unfortunately, in the post-Cold War era, the defense appropriations commitment of our nation has been steadily declining. The need to balance the budget has led some in the administration to believe that defense spending should be cut first, and it has been. Pentagon spending has declined by a third in real dollars over the last ten years.

Active duty military personnel have been cut by 25 percent and the procurement budgets, which buys the technological edge, that ensures our military superiority in the future, have been cut by two-thirds during the same period. I have always believed, maintained we will continue to fight to ensure that we fund our military adequately within the context of a balanced budget, and we will continue to do so.

I will not risk raising the ire of those of you in this room, places like Texas and Pennsylvania, where they build the F-22's, to talk about why we need more F-15's. That is a battle we will fight in Congress, I think in the context of a robust procurement budget.

The larger battle for American security is how much we value defense spending and the American military in terms of our overall budget. As former President Gerald Ford said, "A strong defense is the surest way to do it." He was echoing President Washington, who 200 years ago told Congress, "To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving the peace."

One of our former colleagues, who was accused by somebody else of being a Hawk said, "No, I am a Dove. I just happened to be the well-armed Dove, because the heavily-armed Dove is the Dove that mostly enjoys peace." That is what we also would like to be.

So, it is the job of Congress to find the military forces and the equipment that continues to secure our liberty. It is also the job of Congress to keep the commitments we have made to our nation's veterans.

I know all of you are concerned about the health-care budget for veterans as I am. I serve as the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee that funds that veterans program. I have been very disappointed in the President's proposed budget cuts to these programs over the last several years. Quite simply, the President's proposal to slice veterans' benefits has been dead on arrival in Congress.

Each year since I have been Chairman, Congress has had to make up the shortfall, and I am proud to tell you that we have done it on a bipartisan basis with broad support from both sides of the aisle.

This year is no exception. While I am encouraged to hear the Vice-President recently announce that he wanted to see an increase in the VA medical budget, it should have come before the drastic budget cuts were presented by the President. Let's be clear about one thing. I am not exactly sure what you heard yesterday, I wasn't here, but the budget we received in

Congress from the President would have cut 13,000 people out of the VA system.

It would have resulted in closing facilities, denying care to significant numbers of veterans, and that is what was dead on arrival in Congress. And that budget will not be passed. Let's be clear about that.

I will tell you something else that will not happen. The Vice-President's announcement said that he would deny care to Priority Seven veterans. We in Congress believe that all veterans are priority veterans and should receive the care they deserve, and the VA will provide that care.

We are also going to provide sufficient funds in the budget to continue opening community based out-patient clinics in locations across the country to improve veterans access to health care. Hundreds of clinics have been opened in the past four years since I have been chairman of the subcommittee. I hope that you will find, as we are hearing here in Missouri, that they resulted in better care to veterans, more convenient, more efficient, more caring and more compassionate, and saving them many, many long drives to far-away places.

Let me also tell you that we are going to increase spending once again for the Veterans Benefit Administration. The backlog of claims and the length of time it takes to process a claim is totally unacceptable. The quality of claims processing is not good enough.

The VA must make the right decision on a claim the first time so the veteran is not forced to go through a lengthy appeals process. We are trying to provide the resources VA needs for improved automation and additional staff. We cannot control the administration, but we are going to provide resources. The bottom line is this: We must remember our soldiers and sailors who served, and after they have served as long as they live, we must continue to honor the legacy of those who have died.

Tomorrow night I believe you have a function, a Sousa Symphony at the Liberty Memorial right here in Kansas City. That is something special to us, because it is the only memorial that we know of that honors the veterans who fought and died in World War I. I have worked and will continue to work to provide federal funds to restore and maintain that, so when you go to the Liberty Memorial tomorrow night just remember this is honoring your brethren who served in World War I.

Before I close, I would like to quote what a President said many years ago. "It takes much more character and valor to fight in wars than it does to be President." All of us in this room are concerned about our future, the future of America, and specifically we are concerned about the lives and prospects for our children and grandchildren coming along.

Many are concerned that our young people are weak and character resolve. I prefer to think of them as untested. Most of our children have never been through a war or through a depression. My son, Sam, and his classmates have never seen a recession. They live in a time of affluence and plenty.

Make no mistake, they will be tested, whether it is in war or

worldwide depression, or other hardship, they one day will have to prove what they are made of. It is my strong hope that when that day comes they will look to the examples of men and women like you to see them through.

Again, we are deeply honored to have you in the State of Missouri for your 100th Anniversary and our sincerest congratulations on the celebration of that anniversary. God bless all of you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, Senator Bond, very much for those very welcome words, indicating that this year's VA budget for fiscal year 2000 will be increased by our Congressmen and Senators. That is something that is absolutely essential. It has been a priority all this year. We are very pleased to hear those words from the Senator. And we will continue to make sure when the votes come down from the Appropriations Committee, the final vote is made, we will know which Congressmen and which Senators and whether or not this administration has supported these increases, increases that are essential.

Comrades, at this time we will take up the Proposed Bylaw Amendments again. So if there are comrades who would like to move the adoption that has not been recommended or approved already, please take the microphones. I will begin with Microphone No. 1 and I will go in order, 2 and 3, and then back to 1, 2 and 3. So if you want to speak, get at a microphone that will be next in line.

At this time the chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL (Cont'd.)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN WASYLIK (Post 2529 - Ohio): I move the adoption of Bylaw Amendment B-8.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: There is a motion to approve By-Law Amendment B-8. Is there a second?

COMRADE WILLIAM OHLEMEDER (Post 2529 - Ohio): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, we have a motion and a second. For purposes of discussion, the chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN WASYLIK (Post 2529 - Ohio): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I think the delegates in this organization recognize the fact that normally I prefer to go contemporaneously, but for the purpose of making sure none of my remarks are misinterpreted, I have written this and I would ask that everyone listen.

As I indicated before, I am here to support the passage of By-Law Amendment B-8. In 1964 and '65, I had the privilege to serve as the Department Commander of the great Department of Ohio. I have had the additional privilege of serving under a great Commander-in-Chief John A. "Buck" Jenkins, from the great state of Alabama.

"Buck" Jenkins theme during his speeches said that we have the

greatest country in the world and we are great, not because of our leadership, because the leaders from other countries had as good of leadership as America. Our strength was in the people of America.

We are better educated, better trained and better informed, and more dedicated than any other country in the world. I share that feeling and I feel that our organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, duplicates our great country.

We have excellent leadership and a membership that is highly knowledgeable and highly dedicated. Three years ago, I discussed with Past Commander-in-Chief Patrick Carr from the great state of Louisiana, my feeling that we would be a stronger organization if our membership had a better understanding of the total financial process of our organization.

He agreed with me and he wrote the by-law amendment which I have submitted through my Department on this convention floor. I have heard several arguments against the by-law amendment, stating that our membership will not read the financial report, they will not understand the financial report; our enemies will use it against us; the National Organization can't produce it in the 30 days stipulated in the by-law.

Please, please don't demean our membership by saying they won't read or understand the by-law. I have great faith in you comrades on the floor, that if you read it, you will understand and you will be better informed members because of it. The fact that our enemies attempt to use it against us, that is not a valid argument, because they can obtain copies of our budget if they so desire.

Certainly, our enemies in Congress merely need to ask for it, so that any of our enemies can get it. If they can argue against this with us, you better be informed as to what it says so that you can support it. You comrades need to know that. The argument that I hear the National Organization producing, they can't produce and mail it in the period of time allotted, 30 days by the by-law, puzzles me.

Bring it down to my Post and I will guarantee you I will run it off on our copying machine and I will get it out, probably with volunteers. I will ask you to pay for the paper and the postage. Let's keep our membership informed. Let's pass this by-law and produce a financial report that informs the membership so they know what is going on.

Every corporation in America has to produce and send to every stockholder the same type of financial report they are asking for. In no way are we trying to get money or in no way are we trying to demean our organization. We want to make it stronger by keeping the membership informed. So what I would ask you members on the floor today is vote for this by-law amendment. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JOE RIDGLEY (Post 8220 - Missouri): Commander-in-Chief, I rise in opposition to this by-law based on a few things, not necessarily because of opposition that Past Commander-in-Chief Wasyluk

stated. There is no problem in getting the by-laws out in 30 days after the by-laws are approved by the Council of Administration. That is not it.

What this amendment is asking for is submission of a tentative budget ten days after the National Convention. Quite frankly, the complexity of the national budget, that is impossible for us to put together. The National Convention ends usually in the middle, sometimes between the middle and the end of August.

Our fiscal year closes on August 31st. We don't even have our books audited and know the numbers from last year until after that is completed. So we can't finalize or even get a tentative budget prior to that time. The Departments don't have the requirement to put a tentative budget together that is stated in the National By-Laws.

The next thing is Section 517 of the By-Laws of the Manual of Procedure doesn't even require the Departments to send their Posts their budget. I don't understand. The way our structure is, National, Department, District and Posts, why are the Departments not required but we are being asked by this by-law to suspend this?

The budgets are submitted to their Departments and to the National Council of Administration and to the Past Commanders-in-Chief within 30 days after the approval of the budget by the National Council of Administration. If the Departments want their Posts to have the National budget, let them submit it to their Posts. That is no problem.

You know, the real issue here, for the second year in a row this has come before this convention is the salary issue. Well, ask any Council member, any Council member. You know, if the Council members want to tell the delegates they are representing what the salaries of the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster are, all he has to do is to get up at mid-winter and make that announcement, if that is the purpose of this by-law, which I really think it is. So that is easily done.

The three top leaders' salaries are in the budget already. Now, the reason they are in the budget is because they are the only person in that Budget Department. The Adjutant General and Quartermaster General's salaries, we have people working for us and those budgets and those salaries are approved by the Council of Administration, and they are in the budget as salaries. That is done now.

Again, I can just say if the objective of this by-law is to publish the salaries, there is a number of ways that the Council of Administration, or anybody that calls for the budget, the Council of Administration can give these salaries out. Our salaries are listed in the 990s that anybody can call and receive. It is available now.

I am not sure what the purpose of this amendment really is, except to accomplish that. It doesn't make sense. Any Post that is interested in the National budget, all they have to do is to ask. I really can't see wasting unnecessary money if the Posts do not want the National budget. If they want it, they have got it.

If any Department wants to deliver the budget to their Posts, we will

send them enough budgets to send to their Posts. It is just that easy.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JOHN GWIZDAK (Post 5080 - Georgia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, John Gwizdak, a delegate from Post 5080, Lake City, Georgia. In the two hundred and forty some days I have traveled this year, not one Post Commander walked up to me and said, "Comrade Junior Vice, I can be much more compassionate, I can be much more understanding when I visit the VA Hospital and do the work for my comrades if I knew the National budget."

At no time has anybody questioned me about what the National budget is. I think we are trying to mix something up here with perhaps some personal agendas. I know this, that as I travel this wonderful world of ours, I find this to be true, that there are more people that want to do right than want to do wrong, and they do right because they want to and not because they know the salary of some secretary sitting at National Headquarters. I give all applause to this great organization for being compassionate, understanding and dedicated. I move that we reject the by-law.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Glen Gardner from Post 3359, Garland, Texas. I, too, stand in opposition to this proposed by-law change. As a member of the National By-Laws Review Committee since 1986 we have worked diligently to make sure that the by-laws that are in the books are the by-laws that we can uphold, by-laws that make sense, by-laws that we can live with.

The passage of a by-law like this that mandates this be carried out in the ten-day period is ridiculous. We have members on the National Council of Administration in every Department elected to represent them and to manage the business affairs of this organization.

If you have a question, if the Post has a question about the budget of the National Organization, all they need to do is to ask. We have copies of this in the office computers and the Council of Administration has copies. I would ask the delegates to reject this proposed by-law change.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade. For purposes of summation, the chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN WASYLIK (Post 2559 - Ohio): Commander-in-Chief, I find it somewhat difficult to understand why the opposition to the by-law questions my integrity as they have done. I find it difficult to understand why they have zeroed in on the salaries. The salaries are a small part of our financial picture.

When I was Commander-in-Chief, comrades, the budget was \$12 million. I understand it is \$60 million now. That is slightly higher this year because of our 100th Anniversary added expenditures. I deny that I am after anybody's salary. I am certainly not after any secretary's salary.

It is not in that by-law and they knew that when they said it. They are exaggerating the facts. I think it proves to you that we need to get this out to everyone, we need to inform everyone and keep our organization strong. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE ART SHULL (Post 2843 - North Carolina): I call for the question.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): I second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, we will move the question. We have a motion and a second to approve Proposed By-Law B-8, which would amend Section 610, Officers, Powers and Duties. It will take a two-thirds majority to pass a by-law amendment. All those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed "no". The motion fails.

Are there any other motions to adopt? Seeing none, we will move on to the Proposed Manual of Procedure Amendments.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STANG: Commander-in-Chief and my comrades, in keeping with the Convention Rules, I will now read to you those Manual of Procedure Proposed Amendments that have been recommended for approval by the committee.

They are M-1, M-2, M-3. I should have read the caption. M-1 is Former Members - Reinstatement. M-2 is Consolidation of Posts. M-3 is the National Honor Guard, and the final one recommended for approval is M-5, Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations.

I, therefore, move adoption by this convention of those Manual of Procedures Amendments that I have just read, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have a motion to adopt the Manual of Procedure Proposed Amendments M-1, M-2, M-3 and M-5. Is there a second?

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL EARL LORD: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Our Judge Advocate General, Earl Lord, seconds the motion. Is there any discussion? Hearing none and seeing no discussion, we will move the question. All those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carries.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STANG: Commander-in-Chief and members at this convention, the committee rejects M-4, Eligibility.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Is there a motion on the floor?

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DOMINIC ROMANO (Post 7330 - Connecticut): I move the adoption of M-4.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: There is a motion to adopt M-4. Is there a second?

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: You have a motion and a second to adopt M-4. For purposes of discussion, the chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DOMINIC ROMANO (Post 7330 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, at our meeting yesterday, or the day before, many comments were made about non-combatants in regards to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I personally am not trying to change tradition or history in our organization, but I would like to bring to you just a few comments in regards to the past.

For 59 years, the Veterans of Foreign Wars have been offering membership to men and women who were sent to Hawaii after December 7, 1941. Every single person who spent 30 days in Hawaii, the 214 during the Second World War have been eligible to join the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

During this period of time, our service personnel that served in Alaska, Ghandi, Newfoundland, Canada, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Panama, all of them were eligible to join the Veterans of Foreign Wars after 30 days of service in that particular area.

After the Second World War, we granted eligibility to those who served as occupation forces in both Japan and in Germany, and through the years we have offered membership to people that have been in smaller conflicts. About ten years ago, the criteria for Korea was brought up, and I remember men getting up at the convention and calling Korea service country club service. Lo and behold, five years ago we opened our arms to service personnel in Korea and now they are eligible to join the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I am not trying to change anything in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We have lived with this fifty-eight plus years. All I am saying to you is that for every man who was in the front lines, there were ten behind him and both were equally important.

I don't care where you send a serviceman or woman today, they are serving in harm's way and they deserve, as long as they are serving overseas, to be members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE WILLIAM COSTELLA (Post 641 - South Carolina): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise in opposition to M-4. The reason, all service regulations stipulate the medal will be awarded for one day of active military service regardless of where you are for certain periods of time.

If this is approved, then we must change the title that we live by, The Veterans of Foreign Wars. We need to go back and call ourselves Veterans of Foreign Service. I think it demeans the qualification that we have all met to be members of this great wonderful organization.

To pass this would be a travesty of those that served our country in combat or service work in a combat zone. Contrary to what the comrade says, Hawaii was not a state at that time and was subject to attack by the

Japanese forces, as well as Alaska. I do object to this very vehemently as a retired military person. Thank you, Comrade Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): I, too, stand in opposition to the proposed change in the Manual of Procedure, maybe not for some of the reasons the other comrades on the floor have said, because I believe there should be an open and honest debate regarding future eligibility requirements for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I don't think that the National Defense Service Medal is the way to do it. This will only create more problems out in the field that if we opened it up to anybody that served overseas. You will have Posts that will look at the 214 and they will see the National Defense Medal and no one will look to see if the comrade served overseas or didn't serve overseas.

We have had that problem with the American Theater Ribbon in the past, and I think we would have it with the National Defense Service Medal. Therefore, I ask the delegates to reject this by-law change. If they want to bring a change to the Manual that would open it up to all overseas veterans then we could openly and honestly discuss it. But this is not the way to do it. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Comrades at this great historic convention, I rise to support this Manual of Procedure change. Comrades, in the By-Laws Meeting the people who had service there, there was a great analogy made for it. I would like to change the analogy a little bit. In our organization, not everyone has strapped on machine gun bullets around their chest and went into battle. The people in battle are just as important to that effort as those who actually fired the weapon themselves.

They needed the ammunition, they needed the supplies. They certainly needed the doctors, nurses, those who washed our utensils, made our meals and got them to those forces in the echelon front line. That is very important. They are all members of this organization and we should be.

The analogy that was made really related to age, that one-half of our members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars are over 65 years old. If the history continues to repeat itself, they are going to die and so are we, the Vietnam veterans. This resolution doesn't just turn to age.

What this Manual of Procedure Amendment does is it allows people who served in the organization, just like we did, to be a part of this organization, work for their entitlements, as we say "for all veterans", and it allows them to become a part of the organization that we all love.

The second part of the analogy is if we were to ask today for every single solitary person in this room, whomever released any type of ordinance and/or received any type of actual combat experience to stand up, my comrades, I submit to you we would have many people still sitting

down.

If we listen, and when we listen to our Commanders-in-Chief, Seniors and Juniors, and we hear them, and I agree with John Smart and all the rest of them, that we need to take the lead to help our veterans, and we have got to take charge because the Congress of the United States is not looking to us very favorably lately.

We are the sixteenth most powerful lobby in our nation. Number one is the AARP. I submit to you they are not the most powerful lobby because they shot at someone or someone shot at them. I submit they are powerful because they had a very large membership, and they are doing a good job because they are working for whom they were organized, the elderly people in this country. That's what we are supposed to do.

We are The Veterans of Foreign Wars for all veterans. This Manual of Procedure change will do nothing but help our organization and, most importantly, it will ensure that we as an organization can lobby for competent, compassionate medical health-care for each and every one who has ever called themselves a veteran. I urge you adopt this Resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade. Comrades, at this time, I am going to suspend debate. When we come back, will begin with the comrade at Microphone No. 1, the comrade at Microphone No. 2, and the comrade at Microphone No. 3.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE TOGO D. WEST, JR.,
SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS,
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: At this time I would like to introduce to you and pleased to have with us this morning, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, The Honorable Togo D. West, Jr. The U.S. Senate confirmed Secretary West as Secretary of Veterans Affairs on April 28, 1998. He directs the federal government's second largest department, responsible for a nationwide system of health-care services, benefits programs, and national cemeteries for America's veterans and their dependents.

From 1993 until his appointment with the VA, Secretary West served as Secretary for the Department of the Army. During his years in the Army's top civilian post, Secretary West demonstrated unwavering concern for the well-being of young soldiers and their families.

In an environment often dominated by discussions of military hardware and force structure, he gained a reputation for making "quality of life for our troops" an operational issue.

In the private sector, Mr. West practiced law and in 1990 joined the Northrup Corporation as the Senior Vice-President for Government Relations.

His public service includes positions held as an Associate Deputy Attorney General with the Justice Department; the General Counsel of the Navy; the Special Assistant to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of

Defense; the General Counsel of the Department of Defense, and the Secretary of the Army.

Please join me in a warm VFW welcome for a very special guest, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Togo D. West, Jr.

REMARKS BY SECRETARY TOGO D. WEST, JR.
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

COMRADE TOGO WEST: Thank you, Tom, and thank you for that introduction. Thank you for your invitation to join you at this your 100th Anniversary. Today as we stand on the dawn of a new century for this organization, a new century in the life of our country and a new millennium in the life of the world, we celebrated events some 100 years ago in Columbus, Ohio, where a group of members of the Spanish-American War and the Philippine survivors gathered for an organization whose purpose was to secure health care for veterans who had served this nation and benefits pensions for needy veterans.

Now, some 100 years later, The Veterans of Foreign Wars and its sister organization, more than 2.1 million, more than 1.1 million of their members are World War II veterans and 400,000 veterans of the Korean War and 500,000 veterans from Vietnam, the organization has an impact on this nation, on this nation's people and on the future of this nation who have testified for the 50th Anniversary, and the President of the United States at its 100th Anniversary, as the President and Commander-in-Chief.

Over the 100 years this organization's record of service has grown and grown and grown. From the Buddy Poppy Program, now more than 77 years old, the program which I grew up with, that my parents and neighbors purchased those poppies, lived with it while on active duty, was accompanied by my years since active duty, a program that sells the poppies produced by our veterans so that that money can be turned in for their support and for the support of their families.

This nation's debt to the VFW is based as well on other elements of its service, joint sponsorship with the VA of the Golden Age Games for veterans who are 55 years or older who are in the VA facilities, can participate in games that remind us all of the value of every single day of life.

A record of service that includes for more than 50 years the Voice of Democracy whereby young people are enabled by this organization to attend school and to be educated in the importance and workings of democracy to prepare themselves for citizenship of the nation, that American veterans have sacrificed to preserve and to secure.

The record of service based on Operation Uplink, I had the privilege to stand with John Moon last year at the National Press Club to remind the world of the value of communication between our service members and home. That is a way to maintain their morale and to assure them that their families, their neighborhoods, their fellow American citizens

wish to remain in contact with them.

The record of service that includes not only a commitment to our veterans in obtaining their veterans, but serving them. This past year alone, more than 6,000 members of the VFW contributed more than one million hours of service to American veterans in VA facilities and state facilities. That amount was increased by some 5,500 members of the VFW Ladies Auxiliary contributions of another 600,000 hours of volunteer service.

This is the time of baseball, the summer, and in baseball that record would be a grand slam home run. For you and me, it is an extraordinary record of commitment of our veterans who deserve the thanks of the nation and of the nation's people. In a previous century, a three-time wounded veteran of the Civil War, who became a Supreme Court Justice, spoke to his fellow veterans about his time in service.

He said, "As I look into your eyes, I see that a great trial has changed you. It has changed all of us, has made us different from what we might otherwise have been. It has made us realize the brotherhood of man. It has made us realize that we are citizens not just of our town or of our country, but of our nation. It has made me realize that there are some things more important than simply doing the best we can for ourselves. That duty, for example, is more important than simply doing the best for ourselves. That honor is more important than a whole skin.

America's veterans, especially those veterans who have served this nation of ours in zones of combat in harm's way, have demonstrated the truth of those words, that there are things more important than simply doing the best for ourselves. The duty of this nation's honor is among them.

In the 100 years of the existence of the VFW, veterans have demonstrated that truth over and over again. In World War I, Americans led the advance in the Argonne Forest along the Meuse River, that in six weeks led for reversal of the war and its conclusion.

In World War II, Americans climbed the cliffs of Normandy with their allies, and turned the tide at Midway and raised the American Flag at Iwo Jima. The Americans stunned the world on the In-ch'un landing and stood and stood and stood at the Chosen Reservoir.

America observes the peace at Lebanon and Somalia and hundreds of other places around the world. Americans fought and prevailed in Desert Storm, and today, as we are gathered here, Americans are in harm's way in Kosovo, in Bosnia, in Korea and troubled spots all across the globe, simply because their nation asked them to be there.

It is this 100-plus years of dedication of the veterans of the VFW, and its two and a quarter centuries of dedication by American veterans, that creates the debt of gratitude that America's people owe to the veterans. Debts can be paid in several ways. We can remember, we can say thank you, or we can put our effort to repay that debt into action.

It is for that reason with pride that two weeks ago I stood with the Vice-President on the tarmac in Nashville as he announced that this administration had requested an additional one billion dollars from

Congress for the health-care budget for the coming year.

It was with greater pride that I saw the Congress responded by saying in the House that same day that an additional \$700 million would be added to that, and it is with further pride that I believe by the time this congressional session has ended the health-care budget alone, in addition to the entire VA budget, will have been increased by at least \$1.7 billion or more.

These efforts of the administration, by the House, by the Senate, are important for several reasons. First, there is the lesson and, indeed, it is the same veterans that mentioned the lesson at another time. He said this: "It is for us to have two duties and they are best expressed this way, to see as far as one may; to try to understand the forces that work in the details of the proposal; to hammer out a solid and good a piece of work as possible to make it first rate and to leave it unadvertised."

To put it differently, if we do care who gets the credit for the good things we do, the \$1.7 billion, if we do not care who gets the credit for the billion, the \$2 billion, whatever the figure is, we this year can do great things for our veterans as we increase the resources voted to health care.

The second impact of this, we won't know the final numbers for the health-care budget, because traditionally in our Congress the VA, HUD and independent agencies appropriations bill is the last one resolved. But we know already that we will be working with an increase, more than \$1.7 billion or \$2 billion. We also know that the 2001 budget, the budget from one year from now, will also be calculated from a higher level.

So instead of just a one-shot improvement in health care for our veterans, we should be looking at sustained improvement in budgets over the next two plus years. The amount of the money, the first \$1 billion that the President has proposed, would go directly into health care, with the first \$800 million concentrating on two key issues.

One, the increasing reports of delay that I and others are hearing in veterans getting their appointments for their health care. That is to be improved by the \$800 million providing more resources. Veterans had never made this nation wait for their services. This nation has never had to wait for an appointment for our veterans to show up, for our men and women in uniform to show up for duty.

It is not tolerable for our veterans to be held to wait for the care they have earned. One of the signature concerns of the Veterans of Foreign Wars as an organization has been the plight of homeless veterans. Part of the money the President has proposed is to be earmarked for dealing with the homeless issue in addition, and \$100 million of it is to go into addressing the long-term health-care needs of our veterans.

This is to save it, that we make a start with the President's proposal, with the Congress' response, with the appropriation that we expect to receive by the end of this year. With the improvements that will be made not just in health care, but in the processing of claims for veterans benefits. The budget proposes an additional 440 positions to be placed in claims

processing.

Some of them are taken from other responsibilities. Now, 140 of them, new positions entirely, to continue our determination that a claim result delay is an effective denial which cannot be allowed to continue.

Thirdly, this year some four new veterans cemeteries will be brought on line. One just opened about a month ago in Saratoga, New York. The second and third and fourth will be in Illinois, Ohio and in Texas. This will be, as the President pointed out yesterday, the largest opening of national cemeteries at any one time within the history of this nation.

These steps, whether they are taken in the President's budget or whether they are the result of congressional add-ons, can have only one effect. That is to pay the debt to their veterans. They are not offered or added by the Congress because we are good people, although we think we are, nor because America is a generous nation, although you and I know it to be, but because these are benefits that have been earned by the blood and the sweat and the sacrifice of America's veterans.

As you gather here in your convention, here in the Heartland of America, to celebrate 100 years of service to this nation, which you have made strong and secure, you celebrate as well the uniqueness of American veterans. One of the greatest writers in the English language put it this way long ago when he had one of his veterans speak to a group.

These are the words that were put into his mouth. "Dear Friends, it is not too late to seek a newer world. Although we are not of that frame which in olden days moved heaven and earth, but we are, we are. One equals ten heroic hearts, strong in will, to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield."

America's veterans have never yielded in their belief in this nation, have never yielded in the love for her people and have never yielded in their determination to support it. This nation must not and will not yield in our support and care for her veterans.

On this, your 100th Anniversary, then, and the 224th year of this great nation, may God bless you, every one of you, and may God bless all who have served this nation in uniform and those whom they and you have loved and who loved you.

May God bless well these people and women in uniform in the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and Marines, who today emulate and follow the example you have set. On this day, in Kansas City, a part of America, which like the American people finds that patriotism is never out of style, the love of this nation and her people is always appropriately expressed.

May God bless this well, dear and noble nation, which has brought you and me and our children's children life, liberty and opportunity, and to which you have been and to which we have been our loyalty, our service and our love. God bless you all.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS,
MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL (Cont'd.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, at this time we will take up again the debate to amend M-4, which would amend Section 101 of the Manual of Procedure on Eligibility.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN LEWIS (Post 4051 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am John Lewis, Past Department Commander from Colorado. I rise in support of this amendment. My reasons for this is such that if not at this convention that at some convention we will pass an amendment very similar to this.

Am I a better Veterans of Foreign Wars member just because I have a few stars on my combat ribbon? Am I any better than the Marines serving in China, at the Embassy when their Embassy was bombed in Belgrade and there were umpteen thousands of Chinamen out there ready to come over the fence?

We could have started World War III right there, but the integrity of those people we have been serving in our embassies have kept us from getting into such things as World War III. We have people serving in over 115 countries right now that are constantly on the alert for terrorist activities.

We had a bombing in one of our embassies where one of the embassy guards was wounded and received a Purple Heart and is not eligible for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. How long can we ask some of these people to go to these places and serve in the capacity they are serving in and tell them that you are not eligible for the Veterans of Foreign Wars just because you don't have a combat ribbon or a star on your combat ribbon?

The time will come, maybe not at this convention, but I predict it will come. I have sat in many conventions when we discussed the possibility that the people from Korea could join our organization. We turned them down for many years. I have been told when I went back that you didn't want me years ago, I don't need you now.

We have got to recognize the fact that we have young men, young women, and they don't want to be called women anymore, they want to be called veterans, the same as the rest of us, serving out there in various places where they are on constant alert. We have got that same position in Europe.

After the Cold War, they were constantly out there day after day serving. I am in favor of passing this amendment because sooner or later at some convention we will eventually pass this amendment. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE HOWARD STEGEMANN (Post 928 - Pennsylvania):

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I stand before you and the delegates today in opposition to this. The reason is that the past three years I have had the honor of serving on a few of these committees where these have come up. The one that has come up mostly is this one.

Also the one that has come up on eligibility of the Merchant Marine. The Merchant Marine fought and died bringing the supplies to troops during World War II. That amendment was always rejected. If we turn around and we authorize this one, for the DSM, I think that it is a slap in the face to the Merchant Marine who fought and died at gunpoint for delivering our supplies during World War II. Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE HAROLD PEDERSON (Post 18 - Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am a Trustee at Post 18, Missouri. I oppose this for two reasons. One, it is very vague and it does not explain the full detail of this. I am a Gulf War veteran and I understand a lot of the people's views.

I think that this amendment could be rewritten in such a way that it clarifies exactly the eligibility. Not only do I feel that it could be clarified, but it should include in that, also as the gentleman that just said, the Merchant Marine, too, should be included in this amendment.

There is also in that, those that are not considered as being in that actual military. They did just as much or more so than some for our country. But also on that, by clarifying exactly what eligibility is, at least it should pass the next time.

I oppose this due to the fact that it is extremely vague, but also does not cover those people that were very supportive that should be members. Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DEAN GREGG (Post 1146 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would like so much to support this proposal. There are many people here that were mentioned earlier that would not be standing if everybody comes in combat.

We have others. Every member here deserves to be a member of the VFW, with no split in the Merchant Marines. Let's take that up another time. Today, my support is based on the personal thing with my youngest son who joined the Army, joined the regular Army four years because he wanted to be of service.

He was sent to Germany. He served on the Czech border for two years and patrolled, and at least once or twice a week, when he came in contact with Communist forces. His duty was not eligible for the VFW membership. I believe his duty deserves it. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE LARRY SCUDDER (Post 1273 - South Dakota):

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The comrade moves the question. It has been moved and seconded that we approve M-4, which would amend Section 101 - Eligibility. All those in favor of the motion, please say "aye"; all those opposed "no". The motion fails.

FROM THE FLOOR: Point of order. There was not a second to the motion. I will second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: I apologize. We have a motion to move the question. We will vote at this time on the motion to move the question. All those in favor of moving the question will say "aye"; all those opposed "no". The motion carries. We will move the question.

At this time we will take the vote. There has been a motion to approve M-4, Section 101 - Eligibility. All of those in favor of the motion say "aye"; all those opposed "no". The motion fails.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STANG: Commander-in-Chief, my comrades, the next item to cover here is Ritual Amendments recommended for approval by the committee. I will read those as follows. They have no titles in the proposed amendments.

Your committee recommends approval of R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6, R-7. Commander-in-Chief, I move approval of those Proposed Amendments to the Ritual.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have a motion to approve Proposed Amendments to the Ritual of R-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

I recognize Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE ALLEN JONES (Post 21 - Pennsylvania): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Allen Jones, a member of the committee, and I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? All those in favor of passage will say "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carried.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STANG: Comrade Commander-in-Chief and my comrades, your committee recommends rejection of R-8.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Is there a motion to approve R-8? Seeing no motion, R-8 is defeated. At this time I want to thank the Chairman for the fine work that you have done, you and your committee. Before you go, let me say you are also the VFW Political Action Committee Chairman.

At this time, Past Commander-in-Chief Stang, do you have a presentation you would like to make?

PRESENTATION OF SPECIAL AWARD TO
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT
BY THE VFW POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STANG: I am hogging the microphone, my friends, and I will get out of your way in about two

seconds. Commander-in-Chief Tom, it is my pleasure as Chairman of the VFW-PAC to present this eagle to you in thanks for your great support of the VFW-PAC and the support of your fellow officers in the entire organization.

I would be remiss if I didn't tell you that our Director of the VFW-PAC is a volunteer director, Past Commander-in-Chief John Carney. You will have no problems with that budget, because you don't pay Jack a penny. Thank you very much, comrades.

INTRODUCTION - GENERAL LEE CHENG-LIN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: For the past two decades, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China have enjoyed a warm relationship that continues to grow. The Veterans of Foreign Wars has consistently pledged its support through resolutions for our friends in the Republic of China.

Certainly, that success in large part can be attributed to the employment and development programs that the Republic conducts for its veterans.

Joining us today to reaffirm our pledge of brotherhood and comradeship is the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission, General Lee Cheng-lin. Comrades, please welcome the distinguished Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission Republic of China, General Lee Cheng-lin.

RESPONSE - GENERAL LEE CHENG-LIN

GENERAL LEE CHENG-LIN: Commander-in-Chief Pouliot, National President of the Ladies Auxiliary, Mrs. Bingham, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my great honor to be invited to attend your 100th Anniversary and National Convention here in Kansas City. I bring you greetings from the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China. Our Commission used to be called VACRS in short, and I think many of our old friends and your Past Commanders-in-Chief and Past National Presidents of the Ladies Auxiliary still remember us by that name. Well, whatever our name, our organization is always your ally in the West Pacific, and will always be willing to continue our relations with you.

February 1st this year, I have started to assume the Office of the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission of my country, the Republic of China. Since then, I have been informed that VFW and VAC have been in very sound and close relationship for over twenty years, and that the VFW is the first veterans organization that VAC has entered into brotherhood relations with. Each year our two organizations exchange visits and each year our delegation to your convention found the trip informative and impressive.

Just last month, I had the honor to receive Commander-in-Chief Pouliot and his party. It is a pity they could not have stayed longer with us

in Taiwan, but I think they must have shared some of what they had seen there in Taiwan with their friends and colleagues. I hope what he shared was about what we were doing there for our veterans, and not about our traffic, especially not the scooter riders.

Our organization, the VAC, is equivalent to your Department of Veterans Affairs at the federal level. We focus our services on providing medical care, home care, education assistance, and employment assistance to our veterans. Our philosophy is that veterans have given the best part of their life to serve the country and the people, and so, when they are retired the country needs to reciprocate their contribution by providing them at least a decent life.

In the past years, our delegations visited your VA Medical Centers and other service facilities; they brought back to Taiwan many ideas about how you serve your veterans and how your veterans and the American veteran organizations continue to show patriotism to your country; and we learned.

Ladies and gentlemen, veterans are adorable and respectful. The majority of us present today are veterans. When we were in active service, we served our country with all our might, and after we retire we are still patriotic and loyal to our country. That is the unique nature of soldiers and we are proud of being soldiers once in our life. Let us keep this feeling and pass it on to our next generation and to theirs, too. Then, like General Douglas MacArthur said in his prayer to his son: "We will not live in vain."

In closing, I want to once again thank you for inviting me to participate in this great occasion and wish each one of you good health and a successful centennial anniversary. Thank you.

MR. HANS SONG: Just one minute. To show our admiration and respect to your brave Commander, Mr. Pouliot, the President of our country, the Republic of China, would like to ask our Chairman, General Lee, to present a certificate, accompanying the Cloud and Banner Medal.

The certificate reads: "Mr. Thomas A. Pouliot, Commander-in-Chief, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, has distinguished himself by his outstanding contributions to the promotion of friendly relations between the peoples of the United States of America and the Republic of China and to the enhancement of ties and cooperation between the veterans of our two countries.

"In appreciation of his meritorious service, Commander-in-Chief Pouliot is presented the Order of the Cloud and Banner with Cravat by the Government of the Republic of China, in accordance with Article 11 of the Armed Forces Decoration Regulations."

It has been signed by Lee Teng-Hui, President; Lien Chan, Premier, and Sun Chen, Minister of National Defense.

We have a plaque presented by VACS, "Presented to Mr. Thomas A. Pouliot, Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, in appreciation of his outstanding contributions to a strengthening of brotherhood between the VFW and the Veterans Affairs Commission of

China." It has been signed by the Chairman of the Commission and dated August 17, 1999.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, this is beautiful. Thank you very much, General. It is an honor to have you with us. We will continue our best efforts to have a warm and continued relationship with our friends

INTRODUCTION OF GENERAL HONG-RAE KIM, VICE-PRESIDENT, KOREAN VETERANS ASSOCIATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: As we prepare to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War, please allow me the opportunity to honor not only American veterans, but also the Korean veterans who stood beside us in Korea on freedom's front line.

We shared the hardships and agonies of a war that took a terrible toll not only in lives but the very fiber of a nation.

Today, Korea, through the sheer dynamics and energy of its people has emerged as an economic power. It is an achievement in which we share the pride of the Korean people.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce General Hong-Rae Kim, Vice-President of the Korean Veterans Association.

Comrades, please join me in giving General Hong-Rae Kim a very warm VFW welcome.

REMARKS BY GENERAL HONG-RAE KIM, KOREAN VETERANS ASSOCIATION

GENERAL HONG-RAE KIM: Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great honor and privilege for me to attend and address you at the centennial national convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. On behalf of all the members of the Korean Veterans Association, I extend our heartfelt congratulations on this national convention and deliver our warm greetings to you all.

During the last 100 years, since its founding in 1899, the VFW has been thriving in its effort to enhance and support the national security policy of the United States as well as to uphold the welfare and benefits of the members of the war veterans. We admire your well-coordinated organization, well-orchestrated activities, and remarkable past achievement of the VFW. It becomes an exemplary model for all the veterans organizations worldwide.

Dear members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, we, the Korean Veterans Association, deeply appreciate your continuous strong support for the security of Korea in its most difficult times the last several decades, and we take great pride in our traditional strong friendship between two organizations.

On the Korean Peninsula, despite its serious food shortage and economic failure, North Korea still continues to build up its military capabilities, in particular, long-range ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

Their unwavering covetous goal of Communizing the South Korea by force creates lingering threat of Communism on the Peninsula and continually induces worries and concerns among adjacent countries in the Southeast Asian region.

Although the Korean War had ended in 1953, the Korean Peninsula has still remained as a cold-war structure as before because of North Korea's incessant provocations in the region.

Nevertheless, the Government of the Republic of Korea is implementing a forward-looking engagement policy towards North Korea, providing humanitarian aid such as food, fertilizer, economical assistance to them, which aims at the peaceful coexistence of the two Koreas as well as the dismantlement of the Cold War structure on the Korean Peninsula.

This Engagement Policy we are firmly committing has earned strong support from the leaders of the United States of America, Japan, China and Russia.

We hope that you extend us continued support to our endeavor to realize peaceful coexistence between the two Koreas and eventually achieve the ultimately goal of peaceful unification on the Korean Peninsula.

Again, congratulating the centennial national convention, I sincerely wish your VFW will continue to develop and prosper in the coming millennium years.

At this time, on behalf of General Chang Tae-wan, President of the Korean Veterans Association, I would like to present a plaque of appreciation to Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot, who devoted himself to the promotion of friendly relations between the two organizations for the past years.

COLONEL YON-SOO KIM: On behalf of the President of the Korean Veterans Commission, I would like to present this plaque to Commander-in-Chief Pouliot. It reads, "In grateful recognition of the dedication and continued support to the Republic of Korea and to the promotion of friendly nations between the two organizations." This is presented this 17th day of August, 1999, by the President of the Korean Veterans Association, General Chang Tae-wan.

INTRODUCTION OF PROSPER J.G.A. EGO, CHAIRMAN OF OSL

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrades, our Commander-in-Chief has given me the privilege of introducing our next guest. The Veterans of Foreign Wars has enjoyed a long-lasting friendship with the Legion of Ex-Servicemen of the Netherlands since the signing of a brotherhood agreement between the two veterans groups in March, 1984.

Both the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the OSL have consistently

pledged their support for a consistent NATO membership to ensure the peace and stability in Europe.

Today, the VFW and OSL both share an unshakable loyalty to a common cause, freedom.

Joining us today to reaffirm our pledge of brotherhood and comradeship is the Chairman of the Legion of Ex-Servicemen of the Netherlands, Prosper J.G.A. Ego.

Comrades, please welcome the distinguished chairman, Mr. Ego, to the 100th VFW National Convention.

REMARKS BY PROSPER J.G.A. EGO,
CHAIRMAN OF THE LEGION OF EX-SERVICEMEN OF THE
NETHERLANDS

MR. PROSPER EGO: Commander-in-Chief Pouliot, Officials and Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the USA:

Comrades, standing before you in this big Congress Hall here, I remember the historic moment on the 4th of March, 1984, fifteen years ago from now in Washington, D.C., that your then Commander-in-Chief Cliff Olson and myself, on behalf of the Legion of Ex-Servicemen of the Netherlands, confirmed with our signatures the brotherhood agreement between both of our organizations.

Fifteen years later we have come this week to Kansas City to attend this National Convention 1999 in which your organization celebrates its 100th Year Anniversary.

First of all, I have the honor and the privilege to offer you on behalf of the members of the Dutch Legion of Ex-Servicemen and the Foundation for Freedom and Security OSL, our congratulations with this memorable milestone in the history of the VFW and to pay our sincere respects to those who have given their efforts to build this excellent and impressive organization of veterans. You all can be proud of the success you have achieved.

I would like to express also our sincere appreciation to all of your officers for their friendship and support. I know some of them for so many years, but it is in particular your Past Commander-in-Chief and Past Adjutant General Howard E. Vander Clute, who laid the first stone in the building of our friendship.

I take this opportunity as well to confirm that nothing of what we have put down in the Brotherhood Agreement has lost strength or value and that we are still firmly determined to fulfill our share of it.

For those reasons, we consider it an honor and a privilege to belong to the circle of friendship and to contribute, whenever possible, in defending the values and standards so many have fought for and still live on with the results of their physical and mental wounds, and not to forget the hundreds and thousands who have given the ultimate sacrifice of their lives.

In the past, I was given the opportunity several times to attend your Washington Conferences as well as some of the annual conventions to be

able also to say a few words during the general sessions, and even during the meeting of the National Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, and to pay attention to the problems we all are occupied with.

We are happy with the close relations as they exist between the USA and my country. Quite different from what a lot of people in Europe are thinking, is that we have never doubted the profoundness of our relations.

The friendship and good relations between our people do not depend on only who lives in the White House for a limited period, but on what still lives in the hearts of our people for unlimited time, isn't it?

In fact, there are too many recollections and mutual interests that unite us strongly and that place us under a strict moral obligation.

For a long period of time, the occasion will be commemorated that on the 6th of June, 1944, gigantic allied forces under the supreme command of General Eisenhower landed on the Normandy beaches and began their marches to liberate Europe from the German Nazi boots; a military operation second to none as it is laid down in many movie pictures and many accounts to show how it was and how it did happen.

Recollections in analysis which convince us again about the huge effort and the enormous sacrifices to be made for liberation of Western Europe.

Thereafter, most of the American forces stayed to contribute their share in a NATO-partnership to defend our continent against possible military adventures by the now collapsed world Communism. I will also point to the efforts of the American forces in Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf and many other places where freedom, security and democracy were at stake and still are.

I don't use perfunctory or ceremonial words to express our thanks and solidarity to your great nation, and especially to your organization for your year-long contributions and the sacrifices you have made.

We don't need to underline or to discuss the policy of our governments regarding special political situations, for the reason that we as ordinary citizens together have the right to criticize some elements of their policy. In that respect, the strong and ever-lasting support of the men and women in the armed forces, who just must do the dirty job, must be ours and their highest and only priority, especially when they return home.

Veterans organizations have the duty then to help them when necessary. Your activities in this field are a good example for all veteran organizations in the whole world.

Time does not permit me to dwell in detail on all facets which unite us. I hope that our presence here with the standard of my country and organization with us will convince you that we will continue in the future as we did in the past for our efforts in accordance with the framework of the Brotherhood Agreement, like we signed in 1984.

I wish you all a very good and inspiring convention and a very lasting prosperity for the years to come. Thank you for the invitation to be

able to be here with our delegation to join you all and for your friendship and hospitality, and above all for the privilege to be your partners in the brotherhood. God bless you all.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you for those kind words. I present to you a memento, our 100th Anniversary Book, 1899-1999.

INTRODUCTION OF GEORGE FOREMAN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, it is a special pleasure to introduce this morning a man who has won the hearts of many Americans. A heavyweight boxer who won the world championship as a 24-year-old, when he dropped Joe Frazier in two rounds, lost it a year later to Muhammed Ali, and then coming back twenty years later to regain the title at the age of 45, a come-back story of all times.

He has also found God, which led him to develop a church and youth center.

As likeable in the public arena as he is big and strong, he is a visible spokesman for many products and causes and briefly starred in a television series, "George," 1993.

Mr. Foreman is here with us today to make a special presentation in honor of his father. Mr. Foreman was the first individual to receive the first Hall of Fame Award in 1973. Please join me in a warm VFW welcome for a very special guest, Mr. George Foreman, the Heavyweight Champion of the World.

REMARKS BY MR. GEORGE FOREMAN

MR. FOREMAN: Commander-in-Chief Pouliot, Distinguished Guests and VFW Members:

What a privilege you, my father's friends, buddies in war, good citizens all, that you would allow me to come here and be a part of your centennial.

I was born big. When the midwife came out with me in a diaper, she held me up like that justice lady with the scales in her hand and said: "He big!"

I was a breast-fed baby. There is no truth to the rumor that I wrestled my mother for each meal. I lost her last December. I was her seventh offspring and her most troublesome. She used to find me fighting in the streets, would break up the fight and take me in her kitchen and whip me good. And according to her judgment of the wrongness of my attitude, I had to go down on my knees in that kitchen and pray to God for forgiveness for my behavior what she thought was a proper number of minutes.

In what they called the bloody Fifth Ward of Houston, Texas, through me, she knew every policeman who walked a beat there. My first

experience with fighting was for inclusion in our family. They told me I wasn't one of them, that I was something called a "mo-head." I said I was one of them, and we fought about that. When my mother would break us up, even though angry and frustrated, I knew there was something special between us.

That special thing did not hit me until I had become a big loser before a whole world that steamy night in Kinshasa, in Zaire, Africa. Muhammed Ali waited me out and in the eighth round took my championship with a knockout.

How does it feel to have a change of life in ten seconds? There are not words, but the feeling inside was awful. You get acquainted with designations like "ex" and "former", letting you know that that championship is behind you, farther behind you every new day. And there's a loser. I had grown up being told I was a loser. It had been bad enough then, it was awful now.

Two months later, while I was trying to find myself, I first learned that this man I had thought was my father was not my father.

In football, they had penalties for piling on. There was no one to blow a whistle and make that call. I had to live with it. My mother told me that her husband, J. D. Foreman, and she had separated for a time, one of those family break-up things, and that she had been courted by a man named Leroy Moorhead, and that I had been the result. Later, because her other six children were fathered by J. D. Foreman, they came back together for the rest of their lives.

I was told that when I won the gold medal in the 1968 Olympics Games in Mexico City, that there was an old sergeant in Amarillo, Texas, who told some of his World War II buddies that I was his kid. Yeah, right. They all laughed at him and said he must have had one beer too many.

Because of what my mother had told me, I wanted to find him, talk to him, and get to know him. I eventually found him in a Veterans Hospital in Texarkana, and he was dying. He said he had been proud of me that night in Mexico City when I had waved the American flag in the ring. The Olympics was the first to have real time transmission by satellite to the whole world, and they say more than 500 million people saw me do that that day. Looking at him lying there, a man who had worn our country's uniform in the Far East, was I ever glad that I had done that, rather than join the protests of that day.

He also talked about me being a preacher and asked me, when he died, if I would preach his funeral. I promised him I would and I did. They gave me a flag, and I will send it to you as part of the historical records of 100 years. In addition, I want to set up a Leroy Moorhead Scholarship Fund in his honor. I do that because he was never able to counsel me when I was more than my mother could handle.

The scholarship is to be progressive, encouraging those who win it to stay in school, to graduate from high school. As a ninth-grade dropout, the college door was never an option for me. This way I re-enlist Leroy

Moorhead for all of time to come.

To make that possible, I have a check here for \$100,000 to provide the means for this to happen, as we go out of the old century and into the next one, still serving. And as so many have said before me "only in America."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We, in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and all veterans are very proud to have been with you when you won your Gold Medal and waved that American flag. Yes, you won our hearts and we thank you for being here with us. We thank you for your fine gift in honor of your father, and we will remember you and your father. At this time I would like to present to you our VFW 100th Anniversary Book.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrades, the funds that were just given to the organization by Mr. Foreman will be the fourth place scholarship in the Voice of Democracy and it will be \$7,000.

We have a couple of birthdays. We don't normally do this, but these folks are hard-working each and every day of this convention. Today is the birthday of Barry Hoffman, and Joy Collins-Baxter's birthday was yesterday. Let's wish them a happy birthday.

(Whereupon, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Smart assumed the chair.)

PRESENTATION OF VFW ARMED FORCES AWARD,
GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO
LIEUTENANT GENERAL RONALD BLANCK

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Today, we have troops serving in Bosnia, Kosovo, Korea and the Persian Gulf. Their health and well-being is our top priority, and to maintain their effectiveness as our nation's fighting force, the highest medical support must be available.

I am pleased to present the VFW Armed Forces Award to an individual who has committed himself to meeting the health-care needs of men and women on active duty.

Lieutenant General Blanck's commitment to meet the health-care needs of our armed forces is best manifested in his efforts to ensure that those who suffered from the mysterious illnesses of the Persian Gulf War are provided with the best medical research resources in an effort to find answers.

Please welcome Lieutenant General Blanck, the 1999 recipient of the VFW Armed Forces Award.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The citation reads as follows: "National Armed Forces Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to Lieutenant General Ronald Blanck in special recognition of his distinguished career as a soldier and doctor, and for his steadfast commitment to meeting the health-care needs of not only the active military forces but also the military retirement community. His relentless pursuit of quality health care for our armed forces allows them to

successfully perform their national security mission.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 17th day of August, 1999. Approved by the National Council of Administration." This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot and Adjutant General John J. Senk, Jr.

RESPONSE - LIEUTENANT GENERAL RONALD BLANCK

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BLANCK: Good morning, everyone. Thank you so much for this wonderful award. I am truly humbled by it. I stand before you as a VFW Life Member of Post 3376 in the great state of Pennsylvania. I also stand before you representing all of the men and women of the Army, Navy, Air Force Medical Departments who are committed to providing you the best possible medical care for first and foremost our men and women in uniform and all over the far-off places where they put themselves in harm's way and their families, but also for all of our retirees and their families to whom we owe so much.

The retirees to whom we promised lifetime medical care, and we are not living up to that. We are not living up to it, but with your help and the help of the VFW and other organizations, together through Medicare subvention, through federal benefit employment health benefit program, through national mail order pharmacy, and a host of other programs, we are coming ever closer to meeting that obligation, that moral commitment that we have made. I thank you for your support in all of that.

I ask you for your help in one other area. We are a smaller military today. There are fewer opportunities for men and women to serve, but I ask you when you go back to your communities to point out to the young people all of the wonderful benefits and opportunities possible still in today's military, because we also must have those who have served and those, therefore, who know what service is. You have served, you represent service, the VFW represents service. Together that is something that we must continue to make part of what our nation is all about.

Thank you so much for everything that you do here and in your communities. Thank you for this award. God bless all of you.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: General Blanck, thank you, sir, for your service to your country and particularly thank you for your commitment for caring for our brave young men now who serve in harm's way. On behalf of our Commander-in-Chief Pouliot, I would like to present to you this book, "The VFW's First Century of Service." Thank you, sir.

...Convention announcements. ...

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We will now have the Report of the Committee on Finance and Internal Organization, chaired by Past Commander-in-Chief John W. Mahan.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN MAHAN: Thank you, John. Our committee met and Resolution 206 they approved as amended. It was amended as follows: In the "Be It Resolved, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Civil Air Patrol and the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet programs be added to the list of children and youth programs receiving recognition by citation and medal, based on the approval of the various branches of the armed forces of the United States."

I move that this Resolution be approved as amended.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We have a motion on the floor.

I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ROBERT ST. ONGE (Post 8214 - New Hampshire): I second the motion.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion on the motion? If there is no discussion, all those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed "nay". The motion carried.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MAHAN: Right behind me, I have with me Michael Duggan from Seoul, Korea, the Vice Chairman of the committee. He has done a great job and he is here to help in this matter. I will go back to what the committee has done. The committee rejected Resolution 201. They rejected Resolution 202; they rejected Resolutions 203, 204, 205, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 214, 215 and 216.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Will you read 214 and 215, please.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MAHAN: The title of Resolution No. 214 is Urge Congress to Modify the VFW Congressional Charter to include all "Cold War" Germany veterans with 30 consecutive days or 60 broken days from 5 May, 1955, through 2 October, 1990.

Resolution No. 215 is called Cold War Resolution.

Resolution No. 216 is called Membership for Those Stationed at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba.

Does anybody ask for any of these Resolutions be discussed?

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I recognize Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JACK SIMONS (Post 9217 - New York): Comrade Senior Commander-in-Chief, I move that Resolution 212 be approved.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: A motion has been made that Resolution 212 be approved. Do we have a second? Do we have a second?

We have someone coming to Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE ROBERT RUSS (Post 6433 - New York): I second the motion.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We have a second to the motion. For the purpose of discussion, I call upon the chairman on why there was rejection.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MAHAN: The convention in 1997 passed Resolution 207 in relation to the membership where they were asked by, "I certify that I am a citizen of the United States, that my U.S. military service was honorable, that I have never been discharged other than under honorable conditions. I believe in God. I also certify that (1) I am entitled to the campaign ribbon or medal authorized by the United States Government, based on my overseas service. (2) I have served overseas in Korea. I further give authority to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to verify honorable overseas service that entitles me to membership."

That was passed in the 1997 convention. It was proposed by Kansas. It has been used ever since. From the people that challenged this, the ability to be members, to date only four percent have been found not to be eligible. I think it satisfies the requirements and I believe and the committee believes that the Resolution should be rejected.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JACK SIMONS (Post 9217 - New York): Comrade, we all understand the importance of being able to increase our membership in the easiest and most expeditable way, but we are an organization of men and women who served our country overseas during the time of combat. We need more eligibility proof than just somebody sending a letter in and signed at the bottom saying yes, I am eligible and here is my money. We need to be able in some way to verify it.

I know in the committee meeting they said that our By-Laws and our National Constitution doesn't define what eligibility proof is. I find this hard to believe. I have not had a chance to really sit down and read it again, but there must be something in there somewhere that tells who is eligible and who isn't. There must be a way to verify that.

I don't have an objection to mailing out letters to people as long as we can verify they are eligible and not just want to be. It would be an upsetting thing to have a person come into my Post which just happened a couple of weeks ago that truly believed that he served in the army occupation in France, during the Korean War in 1954, and he said he was told he was eligible. I told him he is not eligible.

Now, if this comrade were to come back after receiving a letter from National saying he is eligible, and he signs that saying that he believes he is, we have a person that we know is not eligible. The process of getting somebody out of the VFW after they are in is very complicated and it is not

good for the morale of the Post.

I believe that we should absolutely have some kind of verification when a person writes the National Headquarters and sends his check that he is truly eligible to be a member of the greatest organization in the world.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrade.

We have Microphone No. 2 and Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Comrades, I couldn't agree more with the gentleman who has just spoken on this particular issue. But for a flaw, we had a problem getting our by-law amendment to the National Organization this year from the State of Connecticut.

What we are going to do and I am going to do as a National Council member, as I urge each and every one of you to talk to your National Council member and have them support this. The National Council of Administration cannot amend the by-laws. This distinguished body is the only one who can amend the by-laws.

The National Council of Administration can amend the Manual of Procedure and therein, as I understand it, is where the Past Commander-in-Chief was speaking. I thought it was approved by the Council. Anyway, our proposal or my proposal to the Council of Administration is going to be to amend the eligibility section of our Manual of Procedure and where it says "Eligibility", under Part 3, it would be inserted "proof of eligibility shall be any form or document attesting to overseas and honorable service with a campaign ribbon, if applicable."

That means that everybody, and it will include the life membership-at-large, comrades and sisters who join our organization would also have to be eligible. I really believe that we need to do this. In my travels, I had a gentleman come up to me and say, "My mother received a letter from the VFW telling her what great service she did in World War II and asked her to join."

She is 85 years old. He told me that his mother was extremely thrilled about this, but she had never served in the service. He said, "Mom, but you never served in the service." That 85-year-old lady says to him, "Yes, but it is because of what I did in the war effort that they want me to be a part of the Veterans of Foreign Wars."

My good comrades, I submit to you if she sent in \$20, she would be a member of this organization. I urge you to talk to your Council member. I plan to bring that up before the National Council of Administration to change this inequity in our organization, because I believe if we are all singing from the same missile, we all ought to be singing the same song, and if I have to prove eligibility in the State of Connecticut, we ought to prove eligibility at the top of our organization. Thank you very much.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE ERIC HALVERSON (Post 5065 - Michigan): I rise in favor of this Resolution. I believe that anybody that joins the organization's Post must require them to show eligibility. I think the National Organization, when they recruit members-at-large, should do the same.

In a case in point, I am the Quartermaster of my Post, this veteran came from another state, and while here as in the State, the National recruited him as a member-at-large, and he joined as a Life Member. When he wanted to transfer to our Post, back to Michigan, I looked at the man's eligibility and I could see he was not eligible.

I called National Headquarters and asked why they approved his eligibility and also gave him a Life Membership. They said, "Well, I guess he must have slipped through the cracks." I don't think that is an excuse. I think that the National should require them to prove eligibility. This is a little embarrassing that they granted him Life Membership. I rise in favor of this Resolution.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JOHN SENK (Post 335 - New Jersey): Comrade Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, I am John Senk, a delegate from Post 335, Cranford, New Jersey. I want to remind the delegates here that 96 percent of the people that we find ineligible for membership in this organization come from the ranks of the Posts, not from the membership-at-large.

I have no opposition to making sure that we have everybody eligible. I insist on that. However, I am going to urge you to make sure that when you accept someone into membership at the Post, and Section 101 of your Manual of Procedure provides that it is your responsibility at the Post level to ensure that that person is eligible, that you carry out those mandates also.

Let me also tell you and remind you of this. Yes, there may be a few that may slip through that are ineligible. But when they slip through, as a member-at-large of this organization, the only thing they receive is a magazine. They have no voting rights, they have no rights here at the convention. They have no rights of membership.

When we let them slip through as an ineligible member, when they are signed up at the Post level, they can become delegates and sway your elections at the Post, Department and National level. So, my comrades, be careful when you vote on this Resolution. I urge you to defeat it.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Is there anybody at Microphone No. 3?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BOB HOUCHINS (Post 1123 - California): I am in support of this Resolution. Earlier today this body turned down the National Service Medal. Without this Resolution, we are allowing anybody to join just by sending in their money. I urge we vote in favor of it.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RON FRY (Post 992 - Washington): Comrades, I think we ought to hold everyone to the same standard when it comes to the eligibility of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I understand when a statement is made that we can verify that ninety some percent of the National at-large members are okay, but I don't know how that can be determined if you are not collecting the eligibility documents necessary to support that eligibility. So let's get ourselves right, folks.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE STEVEN JACOBS (Post 5544 - California): Comrade Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, I am in favor of this Resolution. I understand that the paperwork is kind of tough for National, they get real busy. You know what, we at the Post level, when we sign up a new member, we like to send a letter thanking them for joining this great organization.

I think that if the National sends out those type of deals to the members-at-large, and send them back a letter thanking them for joining this organization, they should send in proof of eligibility. I understand what our Adjutant General said. You know what, we at the Post level, before we bring them on board, we ask for eligibility.

Those members that drive through the town and says, "Oh, there is the VFW Post, I will transfer to it," and they find out they are not eligible for this organization because they sent in their twenty bucks. There is no question but we need to make sure that these people that join the VFW are eligible for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RANDALL BARE (Post 6669 - West Virginia): Comrade Senior Commander-in-Chief, this is a no-brainer. I call for the question.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: There is a call for the question. We will vote on the question to move the motion. All those in favor of moving the question, please signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion carries.

We will now vote on the adoption of Resolution 212. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed signify by saying "no". The motion carried.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WOODROW EMIG (Post 8951 - Pennsylvania): At this time I would like to make a motion that we set aside Resolution 211.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The motion will be in order as a motion to adopt, not to set aside. Comrades, we need a motion to adopt, not to set aside.

COMRADE WOODROW EMIG (Post 8951 - Pennsylvania): I will make that motion to adopt.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you very much, comrade.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE THOMAS KEYES (Post 6471 - Vermont): I second the motion.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The motion has been made and seconded. To give the reasons why it was rejected by the committee, I call on the Chairman, Past Commander-in-Chief Mahan.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MAHAN: Resolution No. 211 regards the Sons of the Veterans of Foreign Wars age restriction removed. The "Be It Resolved" portion reads as follows: "Be It Resolved by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we allow our children, both male and female, to serve our organization in support of our ideals and

"Be It Further Resolved, that to accomplish this goal, we eliminate the 18-year-old age restriction on the Sons of the Veterans of Foreign Wars."

To pass this Resolution would admit adult members to be members of the Youth Program, thereby technically eliminating the program's youth, is the way the committee sees it. The Sons of the VFW would be eliminating its Youth Program, which the Resolution is in effect, is an attempt to create another exclusive man only auxiliary to our organization without the benefit of requiring the procedural steps to pass the by-law change that is necessary to create an additional auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Therefore, we rejected it.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WOODROW EMIG (Post 8951 - Pennsylvania): I am not questioning anything but that one thing. Change that age. All I am asking you to do is to drop the age limit, 18. If you are 90, you can still join. That is all I am asking. Several years ago this was for change and was put in there.

They put in 18 years of age. I wonder where all the conflict is in just dropping the number 18? There is no reason we can't do that. If it is so easy to change it, why can't we do that now? There is a lot of discrimination. My son can't join the Auxiliary and my daughter can. If she can join the Auxiliary, why can't my son join the Auxiliary?

This would create an organization that would have our sons regardless of age can belong to the VFW as the Sons of the VFW. I think everybody should think it over and get away from this discrimination. It is all right for girls but not for the boys. So I urge everybody to reconsider this and pass it to eliminate the age 18.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE TOM KEESE (Department of Vermont): I agree with the gentleman that we should eliminate all discrimination. For 85 years, the VFW has had the women in the Auxiliary, the wives and daughters and granddaughters, sisters. Now, let's do the same thing for our sons and grandsons to have the same opportunities as our women, whether they are veterans or not.

We have sons in the military that never went to war. Let's give them the same consideration we give to the women. They are your sons and they should be recognized as the sons and grandsons of the war veterans. Let's show them we care about them as we care about our women. When the commander asks for your vote to approve this Resolution, vote "yes" at the top of your lungs. Thank you, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BENNY GAGILL (Post 1146 - Michigan): I stand in approval of this amendment. Our Post has a senior sons' group who are very helpful and are willing to work with our Posts. Our Auxiliary has a junior girls group, and once they turn 16 they become a member of the Ladies Auxiliary.

Once our junior sons turn 16, they are out. They have no place to go. We would like to have this age limit dropped. Our senior sons are a great asset in our Posts and we support this amendment.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RONALD HERMAN (Post 8951 - Pennsylvania): I also am endorsing this amendment to eliminate the 18-year-old restriction so the Sons of the Veterans of Foreign Wars can continue, as the American Legion does, and become a working part of the Veterans of Foreign Wars without creating a new organization within our group. Thank you.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE HAROLD PEDERSON (Post 18 - Missouri): Comrades, I support this because there are too many in that young group of men that are basically being turned away that are above the age of 18. We ask for help for our fund drives and other activities, but because they can't be a part of it they can't help us.

By doing this, they can help the needy for getting the money we need like the poppy drives or helping them at the VA level, or otherwise. That would help us in a long way. They say if they join the armed forces. There are so many people that have disabilities that they can't join the armed forces.

There are also those people that are members of the armed forces

that are ineligible that could join the VFW because their fathers have served honorably and are VFW members. How many of you out there have sons that would like to help your Post but can't because of this? I am urging every one of you to say "yes" to this.

Do away with the age. This way we have got extra support. Everybody knows that we need this. If we turn it down, we lose out in the long run. I am not saying they shouldn't have proof of eligibility, I am saying that if you are going to be eligible, yes, you have to have the father's DD-214 and so on.

Don't discriminate because of the fact they are not below the age 18. Do away with that 18. You will find that there is a lot more support, especially in that with your sons. I guarantee you that if you want to see strengths in your Posts, you get these guys out to help your Posts in activities, and I will guarantee you you will get them. Thank you.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN SENK (Post 335 - New Jersey): Comrade Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, I am John Senk, Post 335, Cranford, New Jersey. I stand here in support of what everyone has said. I, too, have a son who hopefully will never serve in harm's way and will be eligible for this organization. But believe me, he is growing up in this organization.

I have a daughter who now serves as a member of the junior girls, and on May 4th of next year you can bet your life she will be a member of the Ladies Auxiliary. However, I would urge you to keep the Sons of the VFW as a youth program. Here is the solution, my comrades. At a meeting recently held with the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief and the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, we discussed this very issue.

We are missing a point here. Not only do we have to provide for our sons, how about for a forgotten veteran in our organization? How about the ladies who have spouses now that are not eligible for our organization who would certainly like to stand behind their ladies in support of what they do?

The Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief has instructed me, and when this convention concludes, I will start to prepare a By-Law Resolution for next year to form another auxiliary for this organization that will allow those young men when they turn 16 to serve our organization right alongside their fathers, their uncles, their grandfathers and so forth.

But moreover, when we allow the ladies to belong to this organization allow their spouses to also serve this organization. Comrades, I urge you to leave this as a youth program and come back next year with wholehearted support of the new auxiliary that will allow them their membership. Thank you very much.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ART HARRIS (Post 5179 - California): Comrade Senior

Vice Commander-in-Chief, I rise in support of this, doing away with the age limit. I will tell you why. In my Post I have an All-State Commander and another commander who has a daughter and a son.

The daughter is a life member and the son cannot be any part of it. Is that fair, I ask you? We need to change the way we do business this next 100 years and not look back on the years ago. We are going into the 21st Century. I ask you, my comrades, to support this Resolution. Thank you, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RON FRY (Post 992 - Washington): I stand here in support of an amendment to the Resolution. The reason is I served in Vietnam and was sprayed with Agent Orange, not because I chose to be there, but our government failed to inform us of the consequences of being sprayed with that.

When I returned home, I conceived a son. That son suffers because of the Agent Orange exposure that I had. He has tried and desires very much to be in the military. He can't there, not because of anything he has done wrong. He tries even today to work with us.

But he still cannot get into any kind of official situation with us that will permit him to work as a volunteer to the point that he would like to work as a member of the VFW Auxiliary, or whatever it is that we need to do, the Sons of the VFW.

Now, I believe that our children should have the right to stand right here beside us. They have got pride in us, and I think this is one of the ways we can extend our family pride in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. This is another way in which we can definitely increase the numbers of veterans volunteers out there out of their families who support our activities. Let's don't turn down any opportunity to increase the numbers of volunteers that we can get out of this. Thank you, sir.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you very much.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOE PERENCIO (Post 1863 - Ohio): Comrades, we are missing some facts here. This is a youth program and men are not going to want to be a part of an organization that has six or seven or eight 10-year-olds. Who is going to adopt this organization? It is going to be the men who dominate it.

The kid is going to walk away from this organization because they don't want to be with adults. A lot of adults would not like children to be in a group that is in the same situation. Keep this as it is and let the proposal next year go through and support that one. This is what the committee has recommended and where we start. Let's do it next year.

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL JOE RIDGLEY: The gentleman that just spoke is correct. The youth program, the junior girl's program, you

heard the Adjutant General. Let's do it the right way. He is going to make that happen next year.

Therefore, I move the question.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The question has been moved. Do we have a second?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): I second the motion.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I appreciate that. We have a second. On the motion to move the question, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion carries.

COMRADE VICTOR SMITH (Post 1239 - Illinois): I call for a roll call vote.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: You called for a roll call vote? It takes two-thirds.

COMRADE VICTOR SMITH (Post 1239 - Illinois): It does not take a two-thirds vote on that. This is not a by-law.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: You are going to call for a roll call vote on moving the question?

COMRADE VICTOR SMITH (Post 1239 - Illinois): I doubt the vote. I ask for a roll call vote.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrades, delegates to this convention, please identify yourself and your name for the record.

COMRADE VICTOR SMITH (Post 1239 - Illinois): I am a delegate from Post 1239, Beardstown, Illinois.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: That is one. Failure to meet the need for a roll call vote, I will now call for the question. The motion was in order to end debate. We will now take a vote on the adoption of 211. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed will say "nay". The motion is defeated.

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief Pouliot assumed the chair.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, the chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE HENRY KITCHENS (Post 3907 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move to adopt Resolution 204.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have a motion to adopt Resolution 204. Is there a second?

COMRADE ROD DeBOER (Post 3907 - Texas): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have a motion and a second. For purposes of discussion, the chair recognizes Microphone No. 2. First, we will have the chairman give an explanation and then we will have you to give your discussion.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MAHAN: The reason the committee disallowed this Resolution was the fee for replacement cards has

already been eliminated. At the suggestion of the Quartermaster General, the policy has been changed in the replacement of the cards.

That policy, which was published in the Headquarters Bulletin August, 1999, provides that the following policy will apply regarding the issuance of VFW Life Membership identification cards from National Headquarters and there will be no charge. Effective January 1st, 2000, all new Life Members will receive the standard Life Membership card and the member may be asked to return the card and to replace it when available. There is no charge and no necessity for this Resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE HENRY KITCHENS (Post 3907 - Texas): I have just been handed that policy change. I was not aware of it. I withdraw my motion to adopt.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Would somebody withdraw the second?

COMRADE ROD DeBOER (Post 3907 - Texas): I withdraw my second.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, is there any other discussion on the Report of the Committee on Finance and Internal Organization?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MAHAN: This one was just handed to me, Resolution 217, Age Restriction, Sons of the VFW. You may not have that one so I will read it, since the Committee did have it.

"WHEREAS, the various Posts of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States are charged with the responsibility of providing aid to their local veterans and communities; and

"WHEREAS, the Posts of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States are in need of assistance in raising needed funds for local area veteran and community aid efforts; and

"WHEREAS, the wives, widows, mothers, stepmothers, grandmothers, daughters, step and foster daughters, sisters and step and foster sisters of persons who were or are eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, are allowed and encouraged to join without maximum age limits, the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, an autonomous, subservient and supportive organization; and

"WHEREAS, the husbands, widowers, sons, step and foster sons, step and foster brothers are not allowed to join or remain a member of the Sons of the VFW beyond the age of sixteen years; and

"WHEREAS, the maximum age limits for membership in the Sons of the Veterans of Foreign Wars as they currently exist are by their very nature indefensibly discriminatory; and

"WHEREAS, we realize that, as with the Ladies Auxiliary at the Post level, none of the various Posts of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States would in any way be involved with or affected by the Sons of the

VFW, without a prior vote of approval by the Post membership;

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we will take the necessary steps to amend the eligibility requirements of the Sons of the VFW to reflect the same relationship and age restrictions as the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the leadership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars take such steps as may be necessary to make suitable changes to the name of the organization now known as the Sons of the VFW to reflect the changes in membership eligibility."

We have no recommendation.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, having heard this brand new Resolution, we have had some discussion on it previously. What is your pleasure?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BILL DOBHIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that this Resolution be accepted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Is there a second? Having heard no second, the motion dies for the lack of a second.

We have completed the report of the Committee on Finance and Internal Organization. So, Chairman Mahan, you and your committee are dismissed at this time, and I thank you for your service.

At this time, for the Report of the Committee on General Resolutions, I recognize Chairman Ray Soden.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SODEN: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. To all the National Officers and Delegates to the Anniversary Convention, I want to thank the Commander-in-Chief for appointing an outstanding committee for General Resolutions. Serving with me as Vice-Chairmen are Arthur J. Fellwock, Past Commander-in-Chief; Marcus Butler and Dale Bond. From the staff was Russell Cutright.

I want to thank all of the General Resolutions Committee members for their attention yesterday and for their diligence in their input and discussions. I will now read the title of the Resolutions and the committee's recommendation.

Starting with Resolution No. 301, Request for Congressional Review of the Federal Flag Code, the committee recommends approval.

Resolution No. 304, Support Law Enforcement, the committee recommends its approval.

Resolution 307, December 7th, the committee recommends approval.

Resolution 309, Recognition for the Reverend Jesse Jackson, the committee recommends approval with the amendment to strike the second "Be It Further Resolved that the Reverend Jesse Jackson be recognized

during our National Convention." And the rationale behind that was it is impossible to do it at this convention and that we, therefore, amended that to delete that "Be It Further Resolved."

We had a motion to send this to a Standing Committee, which would be the Awards and Citations Committee, and they will be free to recognize Reverend Jesse Jackson for his release of the prisoners.

Resolution 311, a Stamp Honoring Audie Murphy, the committee recommends approval.

Resolution 312, VFW Support for Second Amendment Rights, the committee recommends approval.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, that completes the approved Resolutions and I, therefore, move for their adoption.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have Resolutions 301, 304, 307, 309, as amended, 311 and 312. Thank you. Is there a second?

COMRADE CLYDE DAVIS (Post 1604 - Illinois): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have a motion and a second. Any discussion? Hearing no discussion, all those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed "nay". The motion carries.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SODEN: I will now read the Resolutions that the committee recommends rejection. They are Resolution No. 302, Fund Our Veterans Earned Entitlements With Our Constitutional Power. The committee recommends rejection.

Resolution 303, Rescind Occupational Tax. The committee recommends rejection.

Resolution 305, No Additional States Necessary. The committee recommends rejection.

Resolution 306, Proclaim December 7th a National Holiday. The committee recommends rejection in favor of Resolution 307, Pearl Harbor Day.

Resolution No. 308, Pass Legislation Exempting Deportation of Mexican Citizens Who Served Honorably in the Armed Forces of the United States. The committee recommends rejection.

Resolution 310, The Medal of Honor Memorial, the committee recommends rejection.

Those are all of the rejections, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. If there are any asked to be set aside, we will work on them.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE PAUL CROTEAU (Post 8203 - Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that Resolution No. 302 be adopted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have a motion to adopt Resolution 302. Is there a second?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ALFRED RITTMAN (Post 7721 - Florida): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have a motion and a second to adopt Resolution 302. Will you give us any discussion on Resolution 302 before we have the general discussion.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SODEN: Commander-in-Chief, I will read the rationale behind this for rejection. This Resolution is not really directed to any veterans issue or any issue impacting the organization. The premise of this Resolution is that the Federal Reserve System is unconstitutional and, therefore, that the Federal Reserve notes are not legal tender.

While the Constitution of the United States does give Congress the power to issue and coin money, regulate the value thereof, and the Constitution also allows Congress to make all laws which are necessary and proper for carrying out into execution the foregoing powers and all other powers vested by the Constitution, government of the United States, or thereof, and the language allows the U.S. Congress to enact the Federal Reserve Act and delegates the responsibility for the power to coin money and set value to the Federal Reserve.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE PAUL CROTEAU (Post 8203 - Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, you have mentioned something about the Constitution of the United States, and I will comment that our research is deeper in understanding than what the chairman has just announced.

I have mentioned the Supreme Court has unanimously decided that the Congress has the power to issue money and they do not have the power to delegate their power to another organization. So with that, I would say that we have found the enemy.

We have found the enemy of the United States Constitution, and it is the eight international banks which are the sole stockholders of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. That is the international bankers have gradually changed the name of our USA money from the name of your United States note to the name Federal Reserve note.

This action has transferred the power of the USA money, our money, from the government of the United States to the international bankers. To restore our government power over the USA money, we must restore the United States note. That type of note is constitutional, it is moral and it is beneficial for veterans of the USA as well as the American people. I urge my comrades to adopt Resolution 302 to benefit the veterans earned entitlements. Thank you, comrades, very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN WHITCOMB (Post 988 - Indiana): Comrades, I speak in favor of this Resolution. Last year the Supreme Court of the United States approved that the Congress cannot give away their power to any other organization or person, therefore, the Federal Reserve money is illegal, just like the gentleman that was speaking on the other microphone

said a couple of minutes ago.

Now, these United States notes that he was talking about, the comrade was talking about, carry no interest. They are interest-free notes. They cost the taxpayers no money. Now, wouldn't Congressman Bond of Missouri and the VA Administrator, Togo West, wouldn't they be happy to know that they can put that money back to the veterans organization, that \$1.7 billion, and not cost the American taxpayers any more money in interest? I should think so.

This Resolution only asks the VFW to use its power of numbers, and its prestige to lobby Congress to do its duty at issuing U.S. money. The last U.S. notes were issued in 1962. This isn't a new thing. It is constitutional. Veterans and citizens of this great country deserve no less. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade. For purposes of information, we will be in recess after the General Resolutions are taken up.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DARYL HOLLIG (Post 3164 - South Dakota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I was going to move for the question, but I am told that somebody has to speak against the Resolution. Therefore, I will speak. I don't know that the VFW should get involved in something like this.

That having been said, I will move for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you. We have one more speaker, and I want to have that person speak, and then we will move the question. Thank you.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN HOLLAND (Post 302 - Colorado): I came up to call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you. We have a motion to move the question. Is there a second?

COMRADE JOHN HOLLAND (Post 302 - Colorado): I will second that motion, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: It has been moved and seconded that the question be called. All in favor of the motion will say "aye"; all opposed. The motion carries.

I will now move the question. The motion was made to adopt Resolution 302. All those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed "no". The motion fails.

Anything else on General Resolutions? Thank you very much. At this time we will not dismiss our General Resolutions Committee because there may be more work for them until the convention is over.

INSURANCE DRAWINGS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Will Quartermaster General Ridgley or someone do the insurance drawings. We will have Assistant Quartermaster General Maher.

ASSISTANT QUARTERMASTER GENERAL MAHER: I will be real quick, gentlemen. We have the drawing for the insurance winners back there in the exhibit area. The winners for today are:

For \$25, Bernard Gauerke, Post 388, Wisconsin.

For \$50, Ronnie L. Davis, Post 1618, Kansas City.

And the \$100 winner is Ralph R. Schoen, Post 3580, Illinois.

BENEDICTION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: At this time I will call on Father Neville for the Benediction.

(Whereupon, Chaplain Father Neville gave the Benediction at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, we stand in recess until 8:00 o'clock a.m. tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the session was recessed at 1:45 o'clock p.m.)

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION
WEDNESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 18, 1999

(The Second Business Session of the 100th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the H. Roe Bartle Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri, was called to order at 8:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot, presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Sergeant-at-Arms, at this time we will open the session and begin our Opening Ceremonies.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Yes, sir. All rise, please. (National Chaplain Father Thomas W. Neville gave the Opening Prayer, followed by the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: The Opening Ceremonies have been performed for today's business session.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, I will call to order this second business session of our 100th Anniversary Convention. We will resume our business where we left off yesterday. We were talking about Resolutions.

First, we will begin with the Report of our Credentials Committee.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): Commander-in-Chief, this is a temporary report as of last night. The delegate strength is 13,757. Department Commanders, 44; Past Commanders-in-Chief, 31; National Officers, 38. That is making a grand total of 13,870.

The following Department Commanders have not checked in. Please check in. I will read off those Departments. They are: Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota and Tennessee.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, this is a temporary report as of today.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Under our Resolutions, we will begin with the Report of the Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs. The Chairman is Allen "Gunner" Kent.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: Good morning, comrades. Commander-in-Chief Pouliot, the Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs met at 12:05 Sunday, August 15, 1999. Your instructions

were read and roll call was taken, and the Resolutions were discussed.

The committee was divided into one subcommittee and carefully deliberated the 57 Resolutions. Four Resolutions were referred to other committees because they were not appropriate for the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee. Resolution 444 was referred to the Committee on Veterans Service, because it dealt with Veterans Service issues.

Resolutions 446, 450 and 454 were referred to the Committee on Finance and Internal Organization because these dealt with membership issues. The Vice-Chairman of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee was Paul S. Aaberg from North Dakota, and the staff advisor was Bruce R. Harder, Director of National Security and Foreign Affairs.

In addition, guest people that addressed the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, were General Kenneth Lee-Linn, Retired Public Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission and General Soo Kim, Retired Director of the International Affairs, Korean Veterans Association.

The Subcommittee on Prisoners of War and Missing in Action was chaired by Past Commander-in-Chief Billy Ray Cameron from North Carolina, and the Vice-Chairman was Peter Stack from Texas. Three guest speakers addressed the subcommittee. They were Mr. Robert L. Jones, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW and missing personnel, Major General Roland Lajoy, U.S. Army Retired, and Co-Chairman of the Joint U.S./Russian Committee on POW-MIAs, and Major General Rubernor Lontanivich, Chairman of the U.S./Russian Commission on POW-MIAs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the members of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee and the POW-MIA Subcommittee for their active participation in the meeting.

Commander, with your permission, I will begin with the committee report by presenting those Resolutions the committee recommends be approved as written or amended. I will then report those Resolutions that were rejected after that. This committee would like any Resolution that needs to be set aside, please indicate after each segment of the report.

Please note Resolutions Nos. 455 through 462, I will repeat that, Resolutions Nos. 455 through 462 are new Resolutions that have been written since the Department Conventions and are not in your booklet. The working copy is in the back. Copies of these new National Security Resolutions and past Security Resolutions should be in the rear.

When I have completed the report of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Resolutions, Past Commander-in-Chief Billy Ray Cameron will report on the Resolutions considered by the POW-MIA Committee.

I will now proceed by reading the Resolutions that the committee recommends for approval as written or amended:

Resolution 404, The Lessons of the Cold War.

Resolution 405, Limit Foreign Ownership of U.S. Businesses and Properties.

Resolution 406, Take Action on the Immigration Problem.

Resolution 407, Time is Running Out for Castro.

Resolution 408, Punish Terrorists Now.

Resolution 409, Strategic Defense is a Strategic Priority.

Resolution 410, Honoring Those Who Serve.

Resolution 411, Oppose Lifting the Defense Department Ban on Homosexuals in the Armed Forces.

Resolution 412, Maintain an Effective U.S. Coast Guard.

Resolution 413, Standing Firm for Democracy and Liberty.

Resolution 414, National Strategy of Peace Through Strength.

Resolution No. 415, Halt the Erosion of Intelligence Services.

Resolution 416, Support for the Republic of Korea.

Resolution No. 419, Oppose U.S. Forces Under Foreign Command.

Resolution 422, Retain the Selective Service.

Resolution 423, Monitor the Panama Canal Carefully.

Resolution 424, Keep Faith with the American Military.

Resolution 426, NATO Enlargement.

Resolution 427, Require All Eighteen Year Old Citizens to Register for Military Draft.

Resolution No. 429, National Missile Defense for the United States.

Resolution 456, Improve Theater Ballistic Missile Defense.

Resolution No. 457, Urge Restoration of F-22 Fighter Aircraft Funding.

Resolution No. 458, U.S. Response to Chinese Threat.

Resolution No. 459, Oppose Gender Integrated Basic Training.

Resolution No. 460, Increase Military Base Pay.

Resolution No. 461, Support the Kosovo Peace Agreement.

Resolution No. 462, Support the U.S. Army's School of the Americas.

The following ones were approved, as amended:

Resolution No. 417, Support Withdrawal from the Former Yugoslavia.

Resolution No. 420, Support for the Republic of China on Taiwan.

Resolution No. 428, Tighten U.S. Policy on High Technology Exports.

Resolution No. 431, Restore Pre-Attack Ranks to Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and General Walter C. Short.

Resolution No. 432, Support of Self-Determination for Puerto Rico.

Resolution 437, National Security is Paramount.

Resolution 441, Award Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for Service in Korea.

Resolution 442, Authorization to Wear the Bundeswehr and the Land Berlin Unit Citations.

Resolution No. 449, Combat Action Ribbon.

Resolution No. 452, All Acts of Treason, in War and Peace, Against

the United States of America, Shall be Punishable by Death.

Resolution No. 453, Retention of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences of the Department of Defense.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: There is a recommendation to approve.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: Comrades, I was informed that I skipped two of them. Also recommended for approval was Resolution 430, Increase the Defense Budget, and Resolution 434, Improve Military Readiness. I apologize. The committee recommends approval as written or amended.

COMRADE RON HARDER (Department of North Dakota): I move for approval.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have a motion to approve those Resolutions from the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee. Is there a second?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BILLY RAY CAMERON (Department of North Carolina): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion?

COMRADE DAHLIE HERZOG-MEYER (Post 5158 - Wisconsin): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would like Resolution 459 set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Are there any other Resolutions that we have mentioned that you would like to have set aside at this time? Otherwise, we will move on all the others. 459 has been set aside. At this time is there any discussion? The motion is for approval for all of those Resolutions submitted by the Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs. All those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed. The "ayes" have it.

At this time Resolution No. 459 was set aside. We will have discussion on 459. For that purpose, we recognize Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DAHLIE HERZOG-MEYER (Post 5158 - Wisconsin): Resolution 459, in the first paragraph it states the administration sexually integrated basic training in the Army, Navy and Air Force in 1994. Sexual integration of basic training began twenty years ago. In that regard, it is inaccurate.

Also the point of reverting back to sexual integrated training, if it didn't work twenty years ago, it doesn't seem prudent. It would also be extremely expensive for the Department of Defense to take this action. During the committee meeting, the Department of Defense stated that the Army, the Navy and the Air Force had chosen even after the study to stay with the same basic programs, but to make modifications to improve discipline.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: So you are opposed?

COMRADE DAHLIE HERZOG-MEYER (Post 5158 - Wisconsin): Yes, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JEROLD SCHULTZ (Post 1318 - Wisconsin): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The motion was to approve. We are discussing it now. We are under discussion. Someone has spoken in opposition? Is there anyone else that would like to speak on 459 at this time? Seeing no one, I will move the motion.

The motion was to approve Resolution 459. We have just had discussion in opposition. At this time all those who are in favor of approving 459 say "aye"; all those opposed. The "ayes" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: Comrades, the following Resolutions were rejected by the committee:

Resolution 436, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Navy Medical Augmentation Team, Operation Urgent Fury (Grenada).

Resolution 439, Award Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for Service in Korea. That was rejected in favor of 441.

Resolution 447, United States Troops to Wear United States Uniforms and Answer to American Officers in All Branches of Service.

Resolution No. 448, Oppose Any Requirement for Members of the Armed Forces to Don Emblems of Insignia of, or Swear an Oath to, Any Organization Other Than the United States of America.

Resolution No. 451, VFW Back United States Involvement in and Full Use of NATO Military Power Against Serbia. That was rejected in favor of 451, and this Resolution was out of date.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: You have heard those Resolutions that the committee rejected. Any discussion on those Resolutions? Seeing no one approaching the microphones, those Resolutions are rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much. At this time I will dismiss the chairman, but I will not dismiss Billy Ray Cameron who is the Vice-Chairman of the POW-MIA Resolutions. At this time we will hear from him.

REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON POW-MIA

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BILLY RAY CAMERON: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. It is indeed a pleasure once again to have the opportunity to serve as Chairman of the Subcommittee on POW-MIA. Commander-in-Chief, it is a point of personal privilege.

It has been a great pleasure to celebrate the Veterans of Foreign Wars 100th Anniversary and to be the first Vietnam veteran to be Commander-in-Chief of this organization. It is great to see so many of my comrades to follow. It is great that the Vietnam veterans have finally taken the leadership in our great organization and I think it means a lot. Once

again, I want to thank you for a great celebration of 100 years as an organization.

Comrades, I will read off the Resolutions that are approved, as written, and I will read off the Resolutions approved, as amended, and last I will read the Resolutions that were rejected. I would like to thank the committee. We had a very good committee, and we had tremendous guest speakers. We resolved a lot of the questions on the POW-MIA issues.

Our first Resolution approved, as written, was Resolution No. 403, VFW Supports Kuwait's Demand for an Accounting of its MIAs.

The next Resolution, approved as written, was Resolution 433, Interment of an Unknown from Vietnam.

The next Resolution approved, as amended, and most of these amendments are clarification on language, is Resolution 401, Support Public Awareness Projects.

The next Resolution approved, as amended, is Resolution 402, Seek Opportunities to Resolve the Korean War POW/MIA Issue.

The next one is Resolution 418, Assist Vietnam's Recovery of MIAs as a Sign of Good Faith.

The next one is Resolution 421, Oppose Downsizing the Defense Department POW/Missing Personnel Office.

The next one is Resolution 435, Accounting and Release of POW/MIA Information.

The next one is Resolution 445, Display the POW/MIA Flag.

I move that these Resolutions be approved as written and amended.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have a motion and a second to approve the Resolutions that have been read. Is there any discussion? Seeing no one at the microphones, we will move the question. At this time all those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed. The "ayes" have it. The motion is carried.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CAMERON: At this time I will read the Resolutions that were rejected.

Resolution 425 was rejected in favor of Resolution 443.

Resolution 438, Support H.R. No. 16, rejected.

Resolution 440, Appoint Mrs. Ann Bakkensen as a Member of the U.S./Russian Joint Commission was rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, the committee recommends rejection. Is there anyone that would like to discuss them? Hearing no discussion, those Resolutions are rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CAMERON: Once again, it is indeed a pleasure to attend this convention and it is a great honor, Commander-in-Chief, to serve once again as Chairman of the POW-MIA Subcommittee. I think I have served since 1986, so I think I know about these Resolutions.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: At this time I will dismiss the

National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, and its Subcommittee. I want to thank the comrades for the outstanding job they have in reporting these Resolutions.

Just as a note for everyone to see where we are going to go today, we have Gary Collins from the March of Dimes. We have Dino DeConcini, Executive Director of the Savings Bond Marketing Office of the Department of the Treasurer. We have John McCain, Senator from Arizona, to speak to us.

We have Jim Nicholson, Chairman of the Republican National Committee. Derek Thomas will receive an award today. Past Commander-in-Chief John Moon will receive an award. W.E.B. Griffin will receive an award today and will speak to us. Brigadier General Wilma Vaught will be with us.

Also Major General Valdimir Zolatarev will speak to us today about U.S.-Russian relationships. Those are the things we have in store today.

PRESENTATION TO RALPH CHARLES KAHLE, JR. FAMILY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, with the passing this year of Ralph Charles Kahle, Jr., a Navy veteran, America lost another of those brave citizens who served in time of great need. A veteran who never forgot the soldiers, sailors and airmen he served with, Charles Kahle wanted to leave them something of meaningful and lasting value. He did this through a bequest of over \$1.1 million to the Veterans of Foreign Wars to be used for service, welfare and entertainment of wounded servicemen.

To fulfill the terms of Mr. Kahle's bequest, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has established the Ralph Charles Kahle, Jr., Endowment Fund to underwrite the costs of providing travel expenses for wounded veterans, recipients of the Purple Heart, to major national sporting events.

Plans are underway to implement this program within the year. The VFW Departments will take part in the selection process. The program will be administered by the VFW Adjutant General's office. Every effort will be made to ensure that the intent of Charles Kahle's bequest is met to the letter.

We are very fortunate to have been selected by Mr. Kahle to carry out this most generous program for those servicemen and women who have received the Purple Heart. To commemorate this event and to recognize the man who made it possible, we would like to present this plaque to the Kahle family.

To accept it on their behalf is our 1989-1990 Commander-in-Chief Walter G. Hogan, himself a Purple Heart recipient of the Korean War.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The plaque reads: "Presented to the family of Ralph Charles Kahle, Jr., in memoriam and in honor of his philanthropic commitment to America's veterans by enabling the creation of the Ralph Charles Kahle, Jr. Endowment Fund, honoring the sacrifice of wounded veterans."

RESPONSE - PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALTER HOGAN

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Delegates to this 100th Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, in behalf of Mr. Kahle and his family, I am indeed honored to accept this award. I know somewhere up there Mr. Kahle's contributions to help those disabled veterans throughout the country and the program the Veterans of Foreign Wars has established will certainly aid disabled veterans for years to come. Thank you very much.

INTRODUCTION OF MARCH OF DIMES REPRESENTATIVE GARY COLLINS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: For many years, the VFW has had a very productive relationship with the March of Dimes. Thanks to that relationship, we have played an important role in the work that March of Dimes does.

Regrettably, a prominent member of the Board of Trustees for the March of Dimes, the noted actress and former Miss America Mary Ann Moberly-Collins, cannot be with us this morning. However, we are very pleased to have Mr. Gary Collins, the Emmy Award winning actor and TV personality, an Army veteran and the husband of Mary Ann here with us this morning to represent her and the March of Dimes. Please welcome Mr. Gary Collins.

PRESENTATION TO THE VFW BY THE MARCH OF DIMES

MR. GARY COLLINS: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Pouliot. Some would say my greatest achievement in life has been being married to Mary Ann for 32 years. That is pretty good duty, I will tell you that. It's a pleasure to be here, and thank you for that round of applause. I can't tell you how devastated Mary Ann is that she cannot be here with us today. I think she was here —what was it — a couple of years ago and just had the best time.

Something was said about ileitis and colitis, and that's the reason that Mary Ann isn't here. She kind of has a little attack once in a while, and she can't fly, so, fortunately, I was doing nothing, and she said, "How would you like to go talk to 13,000 veterans?"

But I can only recall one other time when Mary Ann was unable to keep a commitment, and that happened a few years ago when she tripped over our brown Labrador retriever and broke her elbow, and, boy, she was out of commission for several weeks, and something funny happened.

I suddenly was thrust into a world that I knew very little about. I learned, for example, to roll her hair. You can't do that with one hand. I learned how to iron shirts. I learned how to cook a lot more, and I learned

how to put on false eyelashes, too.

But, ladies, I always thought taking pantyhose off was tough. Getting those puppies on is a nightmare. And will you tell me what that little space is that you can never quite suck up? I don't care how much you pull, I don't care how much you bounce them, it does not come up. And the best part is, the harder you try, the worse it gets. Oh, we had a time, I'm telling you.

But, anyway, she is devastated, and she just wanted me to express her regrets and her congratulations on your 100 years of service and to the new Commander-in-Chief. I really wish my father-in-law were here, and you women who are married to men who were in the Service understand this. He's 90 years old. He's a doctor, a physician. He just stopped practicing six years ago. He practiced for almost, I don't know, 70 years in a little town in Mississippi, McComb, Mississippi.

And he helped co-found the University of Mississippi Medical Center, was on the Board of Higher Learning for 24 years, raised a fine family, had all of these wonderful accolades in his life, and for all of his accomplishments and achievements, landing on Normandy and saving lives as a physician in the European campaign and especially the Battle of the Bulge are the most defining moments of this man's life.

And I had the pleasure of returning with him to the Normandy Beach a couple of years ago, and, boy, that was something. That still makes the hair on the back of my neck stand up. So thank you for all that you do.

As Commander-in-Chief Pouliot said, I'm here on behalf of the March of Dimes, and I'm proud to stand here before a cadre of veterans who have made a difference by bettering our country and the lives of America's babies since you were founded 100 years ago. I would like to tell you a little bit about the lives of some of the babies that you have saved during your long-time work with the March of Dimes.

Now, I want you to imagine — it's not going to be very difficult for a lot of you to imagine what it was like when you first discovered that your wife was pregnant, you were expecting your first child, the thrill, the happiness, and then for some of your spouses that little inner voice said something's wrong here, something has gone wrong, that sixth sense that women have that men don't, obviously.

And that's what happened to Jody and Jerry Adams of Clinton, Mississippi. An ultrasound confirmed that their baby had died. The cause, a neural tube defect, a serious birth defect of brain and spine. They were devastated.

Their hopes for another baby were put on hold indefinitely. Then they heard about folic acid, a B-vitamin that may help reduce the risk of having a baby with a neural tube defect if taken every day before conception and early pregnancy. It is an incredible, incredible breakthrough.

This new discovery helped give the Adams family what they needed most, and that was hope, and the simple steps of taking the multi-

vitamin every day and eating foods containing folic acid like orange juice helped give them what they wanted most, and that was a healthy baby named Kelsey.

Since 1994, the March of Dimes has been spreading a life-saving message to women about how important folic acid is for their future babies. You know, as volunteers, we sometimes don't realize how families and innocent babies are touched by the work that we do, but our actions have real consequences. The Veterans of Foreign Wars has been helping the March of Dimes save babies since the polio days, billions of babies, and that's why I am here today, to say thank you for your many acts of caring.

Because of your steadfast support of Walk America and the March of Dimes, more babies are benefitting from life-saving research, babies like Noah Kifmiller from Michigan. Thanks to fetal surgery developed by the March of Dimes grantee, Noah went from the possibility of a lifetime of paralysis to a future of running and playing with other children.

With your support of March of Dimes' advocacy efforts, more uninsured women like Latonya Brower from Upper Marlboro, Maryland, are now getting health-care coverage for their children under the new state children's health insurance program, and that means that Latonya's daughter, Brianna, can get regular check-ups and she has had all her immunizations. It also means, and you understand this, comrades, that mom has peace of mind finally.

Because of your caring, we are funding studies into the cause for premature deaths, premature births and saving babies like T. J. Stahlbocker of Rogers, Arkansas. T. J. was born four months early.

He was not expected to survive, but he did thanks to the March of Dimes advancements in the treatment of premature babies like the neonatal intensive care unit where T. J. benefitted from the specialized care and the latest technologies and surfactant technology that helped his little lungs expand. Today T. J. is about as healthy and energetic as a six-year-old can be.

Through the years, the March of Dimes has depended on the steadfast support of our friends at the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary, and you have always come through, and because of that Kelsey, Brianna, Noah, T. J. and hundreds of thousands of other babies across the country have a brighter future ahead.

Today, we need more help than ever. By the end of this day, seven more babies will be born with a neural tube defect like that which took the life of Jody and Jerry's baby, but together we can spare families like the Adamses the pain and anguish of these type of birth defects. What a unique opportunity to make a positive difference in the health of real babies.

As I said, I am honored to be here with you. Whether you realize it or not, you are heroes to the babies that I mentioned, they and their families, and to the babies who have yet to benefit from the March of Dimes research and programs that you fund. When you save babies, you are heroes. The March of Dimes would like to acknowledge and thank you for

your efforts and your commitment.

Commander-in-Chief Pouliot, would you please step up here, please? May I introduce Jane Massey, who is the chief operating officer of March of Dimes. On behalf of the March of Dimes, I would like to present this to you with our gratitude for all of you caring and commitment to March of Dimes. Let me read it.

"To the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, our deepest gratitude for devoted service in the successful fight to save babies, 1999." Congratulations.

Together, we will continue our relationships. Our histories are linked. Our hearts are connected together with saving babies as we walk into the new millennium, and I just want to thank all of you for what you do for America. Thanks very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: I would like to present to you this 100th Anniversary book and hope that Mary Ann gets well soon.

INTRODUCTION OF MR. DINO DeCONCINI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
SAVINGS BONDS, MARKETING OFFICE,
DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Savings bonds have been a part of American life for so long, it is hard to remember when we did not have them. In World War II, war bonds allowed America to build the military forces we needed to win.

Today we are very fortunate in having Dino DeConcini, Executive Director, Savings Bonds, Marketing Office, Department of the Treasury, here to make a presentation to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Please give a warm VFW welcome to Mr. Dino DeConcini.

REMARKS - MR. DINO DeCONCINI

MR. DeCONCINI: Thank you, Commander Pouliot. It is an honor to have few moments at your national convention. I want to use this to point out some of the things that we in the Treasury Department think that savings bonds office have in common with you, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and then make the presentation.

Former Secretary Bentsen was asked why the children didn't go into the services, and he said, "Well, they were all interested but when I told them that the most of the conversation was in the form of plaques and awards they were discouraged." I am here to add a few plaques and awards to those that you have already received.

A hundred years ago in 1899, the Spanish-American War born an organization to ensure fair treatment for all returning veterans to rebuild their lives. Sixty-five years ago, in 1935, the U.S. Treasury Department issued its first small denomination security to provide a trustworthy savings mechanism so that those devastated by the Depression could rebuild their

lives.

Your organization has served millions of Americans for seven wars and their aftermath, have experienced and seen the greatest growth after World War II, but always looking toward the future for members and their families. Savings bonds helped finance five of those wars. We also experienced our greatest growth after World War II and at the same time we helped millions of Americans to save for their future.

You began as a white male organization, but you evolved with the times to a much stronger diverse group, enrolling and serving members, without regards to race, religion or gender. Our savings bonds always bore the portraits of white males until the series I placed in the bonds, which is a fantastic success in the market.

Eight denominations bear the portraits of veterans like Spark M. Matsunaga, George C. Marshall, and Dr. Hector P. Garcia, the last two shown on the security in uniform, and carry portraits for the first time of women and persons of color. The average age of your members is our bond holders, but we are both implementing the changes to survive and serve in the next century.

Finally, we both believe and depend upon volunteerism as shown by the lives of service of millions of your members, including Commander-in-Chief Pouliot, who is quoted in the magazine last October as saying, "Without recognition for a job well done, we can't expect the members to volunteer." We in Treasury strongly agree with that, Commander-in-Chief Pouliot.

Today we want to recognize many jobs well done over many years, including just these few examples, your organization's support of the savings bond program and the encouragement of members to participate. The use of savings bonds in your youth essay contests and in many Post activities has resulted in annual purchases of nearly a half million dollars.

And the service of your Assistant Adjutant General Benny Bachand on our National Volunteer Committee, representing veterans and other national organizations. Now, if Benny Bachand will come to the podium I would like to make this presentation on behalf of the U.S. Department of Treasury, Savings Department Office, in recognition and appreciation of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for their years of service and support.

It says, "Congratulations on the VFW's 100th Anniversary and your service to America in U.S. Savings Bonds." I present this on behalf of everyone at Treasury to everyone in the VFW.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL BENNY BACHAND: I want to accept this on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the organization that has supported the savings bonds tremendously through the years. I know we will continue to do so. Thank you, Dino.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much, Mr. DeConcini, for that very fine award.

We will begin with the Report of the Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions, but we will interrupt when Senator McCain arrives so

he may continue on his schedule. The Chairman is Paul Spera.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. Commander Pouliot, I report that the Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions met at 1:00 p.m. Sunday, August 15, 1999. Your instructions were read and roll call taken, and preliminary matters were discussed.

The committee was divided into three subcommittees, carefully deliberated each of the 104 Resolutions that were assigned. The subcommittees were established as follows:

Subcommittee one, Medical Programs and Veteran Benefits and Entitlements, chaired by Tom Hansen from Minnesota and Glenn Tucksbury from Connecticut.

The Subcommittee Two on Employment, chaired by Jerry Curtice from Alaska and Vice-Chairman John Fergus from Tennessee.

Next was Subcommittee Three on Benefits, chaired by Paul Curtice from Indiana, and Vice-Chairman Daniel Ackus from New Hampshire.

Before proceeding with this report, I will take a moment to express our deep appreciation to Fred Juarbe, Director of National Veterans Services, James Magill, Director of Veterans Employment, and Dennis Cullinan, Director of National Legislation Services for the valuable technical guidance and assistance which the staff provided to the committee.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Past Commander-in-Chief R. D. "Bulldog" Smith from Georgia for serving a Vice-Chairman of this very important Convention Committee, and a special thanks goes to Bill Dozier, Field Representative of National Veterans Service, who served as our committee secretary and coordinated the results of our deliberations.

Commander-in-Chief, with your permission, I will begin with the committee report by presenting those Resolutions that the committee recommended be approved as written. Past Commander-in-Chief "Bulldog" Smith will then read those Resolutions that were approved, as amended.

I will conclude the report by presenting the Resolutions that the committee recommends for rejection. If for any reason the delegates at the convention would like a Resolution set aside, please do so after I have completed each segment of the report.

I would like to note that Resolution 612 was transferred to the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee and renumbered as Resolution 460. Our committee received Resolution No. 444 from their committee, and that Resolution was renumbered 704.

I now will proceed by reading the Resolution numbers that the committee recommends for approval as written. They are Resolution No. 601, Sexual Trauma Treatment for All Veterans.

601, Sexual Trauma Treatment for All Veterans.

Resolution No. 602, Adequately Fund the Veterans Health-Care System Construction Program.

Resolution No. 603, The Department of Veterans Affairs Budget.

No. 604, Amend the Uniformed Services Former Spouses' Protection Act.

No. 606, Amended Tax Return for Military Retirees.

No. 607, Exclude Guard and Reserve Income when Determining Eligibility for Unemployment Insurance.

No. 609, Federal Employees Health Benefit Program for Military Retirees.

Resolution No. 616, Improved VA Hospital Facilities for Women Veterans.

No. 618, Necessary Funding for the Local Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists.

Resolution No. 622, VA Medicare Subvention.

Resolution No. 623, Exclusive Appropriations Subcommittees for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

No. 624, Funding of SBA Veterans Programs.

Resolution No. 626, Honor Guard Functions at Funerals for Veterans.

Resolution No. 630, Service Connection for Hearing Loss and Tinnitus for Combat Veterans.

Resolution No. 631, Licensure and Certification.

Resolution No. 632, Providing Emergency Services to Enrolled Veterans.

Resolution No. 634, Oppose Staff Reductions for the Veterans Benefits Administration.

Resolution No. 635, Equity in VA Health-Care Co-Payments.

Resolution No. 637, Support Legislation Providing Additional Benefits and Services to Vietnam Veterans Children with Spina Bifida.

Resolution No. 643, Hold the Administration and Congress Accountable.

Resolution No. 647, Guaranteed U.S. Armed Forces Medical Support for Retirees.

Resolution No. 650, Timely Survivors' Benefit Program Entitlement Payment to Survivors.

No. 654, Change Rule Regarding VA Interest Rate Reduction Refinancing Loan Program.

No. 676, Benefits for Saipan Marine Scouts who Fought Alongside the U.S. Forces During World War II Battle of Saipan.

No. 689, Preservation of the National Soldier' Home Located at the VA Medical Center, West Los Angeles.

No. 694, Establishment of an Office of Veterans' Widows/Surviving Spouses Affairs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

No. 697, The Use of the "Battlefield Cross" in National Cemeteries.

No. 698, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, High Among Gulf War Veterans.

No. 699, Establishing a Presumption of Service Connection for Veterans Suffering from Hepatitis "C".

No. 700, Expansion of Arlington National Cemetery.

Resolution No. 701, Solvency for the Armed Forces Retirement Homes.

Resolution No. 702, a G.I. Bill for the 21st Century.

And Resolution No. 703, Homeless Veterans.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move at this time the Resolutions as written be adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF R. D. SMITH: I second the adoption of these Resolutions.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, you have heard the motion. There is a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? Are there any set asides?

We will begin with Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE TOM HANSEN (Post 1639 - Minnesota): I request that Resolution 654 be set aside for discussion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Resolution 654 is set aside. Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN McNEIL (Post 5412 - Virginia): I am strongly opposed to this Resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Excuse me. We will not discuss it at this time. Are you talking about Resolution 654?

COMRADE JOHN McNEIL (Post 5412 - Virginia): Yes, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We are just asking for set asides at this time. Are there any others to be set aside? At this time we will move on the motion, except Resolution 654, on the Resolutions that were recommended for approval that Past Commander-in-Chief Spera has read off. All those in favor of approving those Resolutions say "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carried.

At this time we will have discussion on Resolution No. 654.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN McNEIL (Post 5412 - Virginia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I strongly oppose this Resolution. In the past recent years, there have been some very unscrupulous lenders that because of a loophole in the law and the government regulations allow veterans to skip three mortgage payments before they had to submit the application to the Department of Veterans Affairs for approval.

They advertised such things as money for vacation, for Christmas, et cetera, that you can skip three payments and we will roll them into a new loan before we have to submit it to the VA. As part of the refinancing program, the overall program had an 18-percent default rate.

For those loans that were submitted to the VA for approval that were in arrears, that default rate skyrocketed to a high of 40 percent. The

Department of Veterans Affairs, at the behest of Congress, took action and approximately two months ago they changed the rule to make it a 30-day notice.

In other words, no loans would be in arrears no longer than 29 days before they submit to the VA for approval. Now, this is not to say that the VA would deny that application. Indeed, there had been very few loans if at all that have been denied by the VA.

What it did previously, was that the VA could not get involved night and day, and by the time the VA approved the application that individual that was applying for refinancing of the loan could be as far as four or five days in arrears. This really affects more than veterans. It also affects our young military that have loans.

The VA, the government can do nothing about this at all until the ninety-first day. The VA took the action and the rule was instituted two months ago. Since that time, the default rate of refinancing loans that were in arrears has dropped.

This Resolution does nothing with that. All this Resolution does is take it back to the dark age of now allowing unscrupulous lenders to take up to 90 days and encourage veterans and active duty military to have a loan go for three months in arrears in payments before they have to submit that application.

This is a protection for the military. This is the protection for our veterans. All basically this will do, if it takes it back, will mandate that the Veterans of Foreign Wars approve or allow what I can only call the modern day loan sharking. We must have that protection. There are all kinds of good reasons to reject this Resolution. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

I recognize Microphone No. 1.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LARRY RIVERS (Post 1736 - Louisiana): Commander-in-Chief, Larry Rivers, a delegate from VFW Post 1736, and a member of the Veterans Service Committee that considered these Resolutions. Initially, let me say I am just as strongly in favor of passing this Resolution as Mr. McNeil, a member of our staff in Washington, isn't in favor.

I have an obligation to correct what I believe, based on having worked with this Resolution, are misstatements about its intent. This Resolution will do nothing to prevent so-called loan sharking. I don't want to talk about what is good for the government, I want to talk about what is good for veterans.

I am not a spokesman for the VA and I am not a spokesman for the government. Somebody needs to get up and speak for these young men and women that do have trouble with their loans and do have trouble with defaults. The fact of the matter is up until about a month and one-half ago, the rule was that the veteran who was 90 days in default, he could go to a lender and if he or she was creditworthy, could get the lender to refinance the loan, and that is all they had to do.

All this rule does is change it so now if you are more than 30 days in default you have to go do the paperwork maze. Again, it reminds me I am from the government, I am here to help. The same agency that takes care of handling our VA claims, handles the VA loans.

What we are talking about here, when we talk about seeing these big percentage numbers, we are talking about a very small number of loans. What the rule says is this. If the veteran comes to refinance his or her loan, once that refinancing is done, the payment has to be lower than it was before.

The whole argument opposed to the Resolution seems to be based on the fact that veterans are stupid and they need protection. We are so subject to loan sharking that we don't know what to do, so big brother has to come in and help us. Veterans are not stupid.

A veteran that has struggled for 30 to 35 days should not have to go through a VA paperwork maze again. We are here at this convention to take care of veterans, not take care of the VA. I deny anybody in this room to tell me this is in the best interest of veterans to have the time shortened from 90 to 30 days.

The VA is not concerned about loan sharking, because that has happened maybe with two companies, and there are ways they can deal with that. They can blackball those lenders and refuse to let them take part in this program. After this Resolution was discussed in our committee the other day, Joe Thompson came up and talked to me.

He is the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Benefits. He said, "Larry, until we passed this rule veterans were the only ones that had up to 90 days to take care of loans in default. You couldn't do it with the FHA, and it was only veterans. This brings veterans in compliance with the VA and the FHA."

I said, "Joe, if that is the case, then I rest my case. I don't know what is going on with the FHA and I don't care what is going on with HUD, but I know that if the veteran needs help he should not have to go through another paperwork maze through the VA."

So I urge you strongly to pass this Resolution. It is in the best interest of those veterans who are suffering. It may not be in the best interest of the VA, but it darn sure is in the best interest of veterans and that is what we are here for and nothing else. Thank you, Comrade Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DENNIS CULLINAN (Post 7916 - Virginia): I am here strongly to oppose Resolution 654. What this Resolution would do is undo a rule change of VA financing regulation that is intended to do one thing, specifically take veterans from unscrupulous lenders, period.

It bears mentioning that the lending industry over the past several months has conducted the nationwide public relations campaign costing hundreds of thousands of dollars to undo this rule change. I can assure you all here today they are not spending this kind of money and taking this kind

of interest for the sake of veterans. They are doing it for the sake of profit.

Well, I can tell you they failed in the court of public opinion and they failed in the court of laws, and they are going to turn upon the Congress to undo their rule to protect veterans. With respect to advocacy, we have two outstanding champions in the House of Representatives, the Chairman of the House Veterans Committee, Bob Stump, and ranking member Lane Evans, who have spoken out in support of this rules change in opposition to this Resolution.

Let me read a part of a section of the letter from them on this issue. "Recently, some lenders have been encouraging veterans to refinance under circumstances other than in their own best interest. Some lenders have, in fact, encouraged veterans to step up the mortgage game to go shopping or vacation. The missed payments will be rolled into a new loan."

Not only does that violate the intent of the law but it increases the indebtedness of the veteran. As a result of this practice, veterans sometimes actually had a higher monthly payment after refinancing or found that the loan value exceeded the value of the property. That is not surprising the VA has seen the rising rate of foreclosures.

I can tell you, comrades, in one particular district the rate of foreclosure is 40 percent among those with those kind of refinancing schemes, where it is only 18 percent among the rest of the refinancing population. I urge all of you here today to reject this Resolution. Once again, it will put veterans in harm's way. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE FRED JUARBE (Post 401 - New Mexico): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Fred Juarbe, a delegate from VFW Post 401, Albuquerque, New Mexico. I want to speak in opposition to this Resolution and call for its rejection. I, too, am a veterans' advocate and I have three decades of record as a veterans' advocate.

I agree with Comrade Rivers that we must assist veterans. A loan that is encouraged to fall in arrears, as a result of unscrupulous lenders who urges the individual to forego one payment, two payments, three payments, and roll it over into a new loan, even if it is at a lower monthly payment, still results in a larger loan balance. That just doesn't make sense.

The VA has a loan management program. That loan management program assists veterans who are going into arrears to either negotiate with the lender for reduced payments for a period of time, or to refinance that program. The VA can only assist if the veteran comes to them.

We get many calls ourselves at our 1-800 number requesting assistance on that. Our service officers deal with that. We immediately put them in contact with the VA to initiate that loan management and assistance process. If a veteran is told by a mortgage lender that it is okay to forego one, two or three payments, that individual veteran is then being misled to believing that he would have no problems.

The VA will never know that that individual needs assistance and

could not assist them. I think we are, as veterans advocates, not interested in an efficiency operation of government just for the sake of efficiency, but we want it to be an effective program.

We do have a responsibility to maintain a sound fiscal program. Comrades, we all have our financial responsibilities. When does it ever make sense for us to forego paying our bills? It just doesn't make sense. The VA is attempting to bring order to the program and to ensure that veterans not be taken advantage of.

Is it broken? No, it is sound fiscal management of a program. The record has shown and there has been an increase in loan defaults among the refinanced loans compared to all other loans. That is what they are trying to do with the change in the regulation. It is a sound position.

These arguments against, the letters that have been written to the VA are form letters that have been provided by the mortgage lenders to veterans to send the message to the VA. It is not a grassroots effort of swelling or concern about the condition.

It is a mortgage lender's financial corporate interest that is driving this effort. This is not a good Resolution. I urge you, comrades, in the interest of maintaining a good program to help veterans to reject this Resolution. Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

For purposes of summation, the chair recognizes Microphone No.

1.

COMRADE JOHN O'NEIL (Post 5412 - Virginia): Thank you very much. I want to caution the comrades here to be careful about the emotion on this issue. I need to rebut my esteemed comrade from Louisiana. This has nothing to do with the paperwork maze of the VA.

Indeed, he makes our argument for us. If we are engaged in a maze of paperwork from the VA, it would definitely be better to engage that in 30 days instead of 90 days. That maze takes two or three months to approve the application. If we do it in 90 days, we are talking about our young veterans in active military now being five to six months in arrears in mortgage payments.

I have one question of the comrades in the audience here. How many of my fellow comrades would advise your sons and daughters who are in active military right now, or young veterans that are trying to refinance, how many of you would advise them that it is all right to go three months in arrears on a mortgage payment before you make application to the VA for approval? Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrades.

For purposes of summation, the chair recognizes Microphone No.

1.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LARRY RIVERS (Post 1736 - Louisiana): Thank you, Comrade Commander. I want to take a stab at this again. It seems to me we set up a straw man here that we are going to try to tear down, and that is the mortgage lenders. Why does nobody address

the issue of the time factors here? If a veteran is 35 days in default, he finds a lender to refinance his loan, then he doesn't have to go back to the VA.

To say this is mortgage lenders is simply not the case. I have never heard members of our Washington staff get up here in such turmoil over such an issue that is so pro-veteran. I have in my hand here a paper from Capitol Hill. This is a list of all kinds of people here.

It says basically while veterans are in harm's way, the VA passes devastating legislation. I will tell you some people that are in favor of what is contained in this resolution and this was back in May. The Honorable Ben Gillman of the House of Representatives; the Honorable Collins Peterson of the House of Representatives; the Honorable Dan Burton of the House of Representatives; Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Department of Texas; South Central Georgia's County Federation Civic Organization; the Vietnam Veterans of America; the National Association of City Groups; the Annapolis City Coalition; the City Council of Bakersfield, California; West Georgia's Homebuilders Association, and others.

So to stand up here and try to set up mortgage backers as the straw man over whether you let somebody finance a loan 30 or 90 days, the truth is you cannot finance it if your note is any higher. It has nothing to do with unscrupulous lenders. I urge you to keep that in mind.

We are talking about our fellow veterans that may be 30 days in default. If they had to go through the VA, the VA doesn't approve them, they take their home. Give them another chance. Let's talk about the 30 to 60 to 90-day period. That is what is at stake here.

It is time that we as the VFW look out for those that can't look out for themselves, because they are trying. Just to say that the veteran is 30 or 60 days in default, he is trying to somehow cheat the government by rolling into some mortgage payment, I don't believe the veterans cheat the government.

I believe that if they are 30 to 60 days behind it is because they are struggling financially. I don't want this organization, on its 100th birthday, whatever we say, look, why is it the VFW always sides with the VA instead of veterans? I urge you to strongly pass this Resolution, block this haze and smoke and focus on the issue, which is the time period of the mortgage lender. Pass this Resolution, I urge my comrades.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Microphone No. 2 for the purpose of summation.

COMRADE DENNIS CULLINAN (Post 7916 - Virginia): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I can tell you that I am well familiar with that. It was paid for by the lending institutes. That is an ad that was taken out in the Washington Post and other newspapers across the country.

In addition, they have taken the issue to Court, they have hired public relations consultants, and so forth, to promote this issue. The reason they have done it is not to spare veterans time in the processing of their loans, the reason they have done it is so they are better able, some of the unscrupulous, to dupe them in giving them a few loans and getting

themselves in financial problems. That is what is behind it.

Despite what Congressman Gillman and others may have said, I can point out to you that those individuals that work on a daily basis with veterans, Representative Stump and Lane Evans, oppose undoing the VA rule. They oppose undoing it because they know that persons will be harmed if it happens and for the sake of the profit-making industry. I strongly urge we opposed Resolution 654.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

The last to speak on the issue is Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE FRED JUARBE (Post 401 - New Mexico): I would like to reinforce and underscore the fact that notwithstanding other members of the Congress who have been included in that ad that Comrade Rivers has cited, we have proven veterans advocates, veterans champions within the House Veterans Affairs Committee in Bob Stump and Congressman Lane Evans who have supported the VA's position on this regulation.

We are not talking about a longer process here necessarily. The VA is handling these loans and returning them back and approving them in a period of two weeks at the max. We are not talking about months. We are not talking of very many weeks. Two weeks is the turnaround time on the financing.

What comes into play now is the VA, in carrying out its responsibilities to assist the veterans to ensure that this is a sound move in the best interest of the veteran, not in the best interest of the mortgage finance company. Then they will refinance.

They have not been rejecting these loans, they have been turning them around as quickly as possible. So I urge you, comrades, that we reject Resolution 654 as not being in the best interest of veterans and military active duty personnel. Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade. Comrades, we will move the question. The motion was to pass Resolution 654. All those in favor of passing 654 say "aye"; all those opposed "no". The "nays" have it. The Resolution fails.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE JOHN MCCAIN, UNITED STATES SENATOR

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, we are very pleased this morning to have with us this morning Senator John McCain, a presidential candidate for the 2000 presidential campaign.

Senator McCain is a man who has always put America's interests ahead of his own. His character is illustrated by his entire life, from narrowly escaping death on the flight deck of the USS Forrestal, to preserving for five and a half years as a Prisoner of War in Hanoi, to his outstanding service in the U.S. Senate.

After graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1958, Senator McCain became a naval aviator and went on to serve a 22-year Navy

career, retiring as a captain in 1981.

Currently serving his third term in the U.S. Senate, Senator McCain is Chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee, and serves on the Armed Services and Indian Affairs Committees.

Please join me in a very warm VFW welcome for a fellow veteran, Senator John McCain.

REMARKS BY SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN

SENATOR MCCAIN: Thank you for that warm welcome. It is a great privilege to be here. I have many friends here today, but I would like to introduce two of my dear friends, many of whom you know. First of all, my senior ranking officer in prison, Bud Day, Congressional Honor winner, truly a great man; and my dad.

I have another one I would like to welcome with me. He was the first American Prisoner of War in North Vietnam, shot down in August of 1964 and remained there until 1973, the longest-held American pilot in North Vietnam. Whenever I began to feel sorry for myself, which I did very often, I was thinking of my dear friend Everett Alvarez. Everett, I want to thank you.

It is a great privilege for me to be here on your 100th Anniversary, and at our final convention of this century.

As the days remaining in the 20th Century, the American century, dwindle down to a few, we look with pride upon our country's role in world history. We are justifiably proud, but we are also humble. Humble in the knowledge that we possess our freedom because of the devotion of those Americans who sacrificed greatly to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity. Those brave Americans to whom duty, honor and love of country were more dear to them than self.

And, we are humble as we remember our sons and daughters who stand in their posts today in foreign lands across the globe, the thousands of young men and women who stand guard for freedom. Their service and sacrifice is our nation's highest honor and always will be.

The world that most of us served in was a dangerous one, but more stable than the world today. It was a world where we confronted a massive organized threat not only to our interests overseas, but to our very security at home. Our enemy was evil, but not irrational. And for all the suffering endured by captive nations, for all the fear of global nuclear war, it was a world made fairly predictable by a stable balance of power between two super powers.

That world is gone, and please don't mistake my reminiscence as an indication that I miss it. If I am nostalgic for it at all, it's only an old-man's nostalgia for the time where his youth was misspent. For that world, after all, had much cruelty and terror, some of which it was my fate to witness personally.

I have memories of a place so far removed from the comforts of this blessed country that I have learned to forget some of the anguish it once caused me. But I have not forgotten the friends who did not return with me to the country we loved so dearly.

The memory of them, of what they bore for honor and country, causes me to look in every prospective conflict for the shadow of Vietnam.

I don't let that shadow hold me in fear for my duty as God has given me light to see that duty. But it no longer falls to us to bear arms in our country's defense. It falls to our children and their children. Should their duty lead them to war, I pray that the battle will be necessary and the field well chosen.

But that is not their responsibility. It is the duty of the nation's civilian commanders, and those of us privileged to be America's political leaders, to ensure the service of our sons and daughters is ordered for causes important enough to justify the sacrifices that we ask of them.

It is up to us to follow rules that should govern the use of force; rules that we have learned from bitter experience. It is up to us to make every possible effort to guarantee that the men and women we send into harm's way are amply provided for as a super power with global responsibilities should provide for its forces.

I am sorry to admit that for nearly a decade now, the government has failed to meet its most important constitutional responsibility "to provide for the common defense."

The failure is both the Administration's and Congress, Democrats and Republicans. It is our disgrace, and we should be decent enough to accept the blame for it, and not subordinate this, the gravest of our responsibilities, to the usual partisan gains.

Almost 100,000 Americans are serving overseas in an unprecedented number of contingency, peace keeping and humanitarian operations. Our armed forces are deployed to more countries in greater numbers for these purposes than at any time in our history.

While we debate the merits of these numerous contingencies, it is beyond dispute that the decade of a declining defense budget and ever more frequent deployments have stretched the services perilously close to the breaking point.

We are, as anyone who is not in the most determined state of denial knows, on the razor's edge of hollowing out, having forgotten the most important lessons of our defense failures in the 1970s.

As always, the approaching crisis is more evident in its effect on human resources. Recruiting and retention problems have grown so acute that they are rendering some units unfit for deployment.

Last winter the Carrier Enterprise deployed to the Adriatic to support our effort in Kosovo undermanned by 800 sailors. The Air Force is losing pilots to the airlines faster than we can train them. Five of the Army's ten divisions have far too few majors, captains, senior enlisted personnel, tankers and gunners to operate anywhere near their peak efficiency.

Many of us who have been criticized for sounding the alarm bell in the past now have the empty satisfaction of seeing the Clinton Administration admit that there is more to maintaining a strong defense than falsely promising to do so.

After six years of severely underfunding the military, the President reversed himself and proposed increasing the defense budget. Once again, however, his rhetoric has far exceeded his actions.

Please don't mistake these observations for a partisan tirade. Congress deserves as sharp a rebuke as the President. While many Republicans and Democrats in Congress recognize our problem and wish to devote greater resources to the military, they often cannot retain the oldest of all congressional afflictions, an all-consuming addiction to pork barrel spending.

While Congress increased the President's budget requests, it diverted far too much of the additional money to garden variety pork barrel projects that had little, if anything, to do with readiness and the well-being of military personnel. And in the most galling and self-interested neglect of national security, Congress repeatedly refuses to close bases that everyone knows we no longer need and can no longer support.

It is unconscionable that we spend money on local depots, or on bases scheduled to be closed, or on unneeded weapons systems when 12,000 enlisted personnel, proud young men and women, subsist on food stamps. That, my friends, is a weak defense and this nation deserves better service from us than that.

The President's empty promises and the irresponsible spending habits of Congress offer very little remedy to our readiness crisis. I have never believed that lack of military service disqualifies one from occupying positions of political leadership or as Commander-in-Chief. In America, the people are sovereign, and they decide who is and who is not qualified to lead us. But as in every walk of life, experience counts, and in an Administration with so few in its upper echelons who wore the nation's uniform, the inattention to our military and our veterans, while inexcusable and dangerous, is sadly not surprising.

The American people must recognize the gravity of the problem before their employees in Washington will fear to do the wrong thing more than they currently fear to do the necessary things. I and others who share my concerns have failed to make our case to the people. I regret our failure very much, and I can only promise you that I will try harder in the future.

We have made some significant headway this year. To address the personnel retention problem, the Senate passed legislation that raises the pay of all servicemen and women; restores military retirement benefits to 50 percent of active duty base pay; makes retirement COLAs automatic; and gets enlisted families off food stamps.

We are also making some progress this year in better funding modernization. But our forces are still required to rely too much on equipment that should have been replaced long ago. Much of that

equipment, including certain aircraft, helicopters, vehicles, and some weapons, are older than the people who use them.

Many of our most critical decisions, such as the deployment of a national missile defense program, reassessing roles and missions, and improving the mobility of our forces to deploy anywhere in the world still suffer from inattention and a lack of dedicated resources.

Most disturbing, we have yet to develop a national military strategy that realistically addresses the challenges and threats of this era consistent with our available resources.

The President makes a good point about assuring that impoverished Russian scientists don't sell out to terrorists. That is why I have supported many of the existing aid packages under the Nunn/Lugar and Partnership for Peace initiatives through which we have spent billions. But in all due respect, increasing the pay of Russian scientists who may go on the take, must not come at the expense of increasing the pay of American patriots who have to go on food stamps.

The simple truth is that true peace will be more directly related to the strength and preparedness of our military than our ability to buy friends overseas. So, any plans to further dilute the Pentagon budget by spending on purposes not directly related to our readiness, even under the guise of purchasing peace, would be a dangerous and self-defeating exercise.

Until America's political leaders show one-tenth the courage and patriotism that have been the hallmark of Americans in uniform, we will keep squandering the priceless national asset, the greatest military in the history of the world.

We should be especially careful not to use the relief we feel over our apparent defeat of Mr. Milosevic to indulge an impulse to pronounce ourselves smugly satisfied with the means we used to win that conflict.

It would be a tragedy far outweighing the enormous good that was achieved by our victory if we used it as a model for meeting future military challenges. Nearly running out of cruise missiles should alert the Administration that it really has neglected our defenses. The inexcusable delay in getting Apache helicopters to the theater should also have raised an alarm, as should the fact that we went for a period of time without an operational carrier in the Pacific.

Had North Korea chosen that moment to commit a truly irrational act or China decided to resolve by force the Taiwan question, we would have faced much graver consequences of that neglect.

The failure to learn the lessons of Kosovo and repair our flagging readiness would be a perilous mistake, because surely even greater threats to peace and our national interests lurk ahead.

The threats to peace and stability are most profound in Asia. India and Pakistan, both nuclear powers, almost went to war over Kashmir. North Korea is readying another missile test. The potentially destabilizing Asian economic crisis is not over yet, and the China question remains a potential flash point.

It surpasses outrage that while 37,000 young Americans stand their posts in harm's way on the Korean peninsula, and our carriers must be ready to rush into the Straits of Taiwan to check Chinese saber rattling, political donations from a subsidiary of the People's Liberation Army are funneled into the Clinton Administration's campaign coffers and nuclear secrets are hustled out the back door of our defense laboratories. That's wrong, my friends, and it's terribly wrong.

An irresolute and ambiguous America, where pursuit of domestic political advantage supersedes security demands, and where photo ops and false comity and not sound security relationships are the primary object of foreign policy, invites instability and danger to our interests and values.

Our goal at home must be clear, political leadership that puts security ahead of politics; leadership that has vision about the nation's standing in the world, not one's political standing in the polls. And leadership that understands the nature of our interests in Asia and how to protect those interests.

And our goal in Asia must be no less ambiguous: a stable and secure region in which we staunchly support its free and democratic nations, while we confidently support and encourage political change in China. That is the best guarantee that China will become a responsible great power.

To the leaders of China we must say, if you desire to be a responsible member of the world community we will support you. But if you want to join the club, you must play by the rules.

If true, reports that China has decided to use force against Taiwan should convince the Clinton Administration to change its failed policy of pressuring only Taiwan to avoid open hostilities. If the United States is to abide by the one China policy, and I have no quarrel with that, then we must be no less committed to the other basic principle of our relations with China and Taiwan, that the reunification of China must only occur peacefully, in other words, voluntarily.

Strategic ambiguity will not serve the United States interests or values in this crisis. We must be very clear with the Chinese. The United States will do what it must to help defend stability and freedom in Asia. We need not communicate with them through the New York Times or the Washington Post. But we do need to communicate forthrightly. China must be made to understand that the use of force would be a very serious mistake in judgment, a serious mistake with grave consequences.

Throughout American history, patriots like you have answered the call to defend the rights we cherish as God given. And as you honored our nation's commitments, a grateful nation should honor its commitment to you and to all veterans.

Many of the extraordinary contributions that you and other veterans have made to our great country have been memorialized in bronze and marble. But more personally, America, our government and our people, should show the same concern about your well-being as you have

showed for our country.

Recently there has been a lot of discussion about the health-care delivery system in our country, about pending legislation that is being called the "patients' bill of rights." It is a vital issue of enormous importance to our country.

But what about a "veterans' bill of rights?" You know, and I know, that many of the promises of benefits that were made or implied to active duty personnel and to us veterans have been ignored, changed or abandoned over the years. This primarily is true in the area of veterans' health-care benefits.

With regard to health-care, the veterans' bill of rights should be relatively simple, honoring the promise that we made to every veteran, particular those with service-connected conditions and those who cannot afford other medical attention. You have earned the right to receive timely, high-quality medical care in an atmosphere of respect for the individual veteran.

In 1997, despite the increasing needs and costs of an aging veteran population, Congress froze the veterans' health-care budget. But we added further insult to that grievous injustice by cloaking our action with the kind of scam that is the fodder for the scornful reputation that many politicians too often deserve. We based future budget increases on collection of money owed to the VA by insurance companies, collections that are not being made and may never be made.

I am ashamed that Congress finds billions of dollars for pork barrel spending on subsidies for reindeer ranches and power plants fueled by chicken waste, but finds it so difficult to fulfill our promise of access to quality health care to those who unselfishly answered our country's call. And, regrettably, the Clinton Administration and the Congress have for several years now underfunded veterans' health care by billions of dollars. This abrogation of the nation's obligation to veterans is disgraceful.

We have let you down and we have let down the men and women who wear the uniform today. We must repair this disgraceful abrogation of our public responsibilities. And I pledge to do all I can toward that end, no matter what office I am privileged to hold.

One important way we can start is to see that the Department of Veterans Affairs serves as the advocate for America's veterans, working closely with the veterans service organizations to ensure that the concerns of all veterans are being taken into account. And the VA and the Administration need to change their present course and work diligently with the Congress to ensure that adequate funding is obtained to meet the basic health care and disability needs of our veterans.

This, my friends, is your health-care system, and changes to it should be made with the advice and consent not only of the elected leaders in Congress but more importantly with the veteran who has earned that consideration.

I want to close, if I may, by relating to you a brief story. Again, you

know we will take up legislation to prevent the desecration of the American flag. I know that many of you here feel very strongly about it. I know why you feel very strongly about it, not because of your own service and sacrifice, but because you feel that one killing all over the world rests upon you, the remains of Americans who fought under that symbol. The desecration of it is an unconscionable act and one that I think should never ever happen again

I would like to relate to you a very brief story concerning why I feel so strongly about this issue. As you know, Everett Alvarez and Bud Day and I were prisoners in Vietnam and we were kept in a condition of solitary confinement with two or three to a cell.

Finally, thanks to the efforts of the millions of veterans all over America, millions of Americans wrote letters and others demonstrated on our behalf, the Vietnamese changed our conditions from putting us in a room with 20 to 25, into a cell with three. That was a wonderful change.

A young man who moved into the cell with me and Bud Day was another man by the name of Mike Christian. He was born in a small town near Selma, Alabama. He didn't wear a pair of shoes until he was in his teens. He came from a very poor family. He was 17 when he enlisted in the United States Navy and later went to Officers Candidate School and then became a bombardier navigator and was captured approximately a year before I was in 1966.

Mike Christian had a great appreciation for the opportunities that our military provides to all our citizens. As part of the change in treatment, we were allowed to have some packages from home which had some small articles enclosed. The uniform we wore in prison was a short-sleeved blue shirt, trousers that looked like pajama trousers, shoes that were cut out of rubber tires. I recommend it very highly. One pair lasted me for five and one-half years.

Mike Christian took a piece of white cloth, a piece of red cloth and fashioned himself a flag with a needle and over a period of two months sewed on the inside of his blue shirt the American flag. Each evening in our cell, he would take the shirt off with the flag and say his Pledge of Allegiance.

I would admit there are times in our daily lives when saying the Pledge of Allegiance is not the most important or meaningful part of our day. In that prison cell, some that had been there for as long as seven years, able to pledge our allegiance to our flag and our country was the most important part of our day.

One day the Vietnamese came into our cells, searched the cell, found Mike's shirt and removed it. That evening, they came back to the door of the cell and opened it and called for Mike Christian to come out. He came out and closed the cell, and outside the door they beat Mike badly for a couple of hours, in which they opened the cell and threw him back into our room. You can imagine he was not in a very good shape. We slept in a cell that had a concrete slab in the middle and each corner of the

room was a naked dim light bulb burning 24 hours a day.

We cleaned up Mike as well as we could. We even offered to lay him down on the concrete slab. I happened to look over in the corner underneath that dim light bulb was a piece of white cloth and a piece of red cloth and another shirt and his needle. His eyes almost shut from the beating he had just received, my dear friend Mike Christian was making another American flag.

He was doing that not because it made Mike Christian feel better, he did that because he knew how important it was for us to be able to say the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag and our country. I hope we will remember and remind all Americans that flag is a symbol of the service and sacrifice of thousands and millions like Mike Christians for many, many years and many conflicts.

You might symbolize to me the service of sacrifice on all of these brave young men who served. That is why I am so honored to be with you today. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, Senator McCain, for the wonderful remarks. Your life and the lives of your comrades in prison shows us how much work we have to do as veterans. I would like to present to you our VFW 100th Anniversary Book and thank you very much for being here with us at this convention. He is joined by Fred Thompson from Tennessee as he leaves the hall.

INTRODUCTION OF MR. JIM NICHOLSON, CHAIRMAN OF THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The presidential election year 2000 is fast approaching. The Veterans of Foreign Wars, bipartisan in its approach and in a continuing effort to better understand the veterans' agenda of both the Republican and Democratic parties, extended invitations to the leadership of the Republican and Democratic National Committees.

While Mr. Joseph Andrew of the Democratic National Committee was unable to accept our invitation, we hope that the Veterans of Foreign Wars will have the opportunity at another venue prior to the presidential elections to hear the Democratic platform relative to the well-being and health care of our nation's veterans.

We are pleased to have with us today the Chairman of the Republican National Committee, Jim Nicholson.

Mr. Nicholson was re-elected to a second two-year term as Republican National Committee Chairman in January, 1999. An Army Vietnam veteran and VFW member, Jim attributes his military experience as directing the course of his adult life. He says, "The lessons of that experience, be it in battle, business or politics, is to have solid plans to achieve objectives, the right leadership to execute those plans, and the courage to hang in there when the going gets tough."

Please give a warm VFW welcome to the Chairman of the Republican National Committee, Jim Nicholson.

REMARKS BY MR. JIM NICHOLSON,
CHAIRMAN OF THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE

MR. JIM NICHOLSON: Well, thank you, Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot, and congratulations to our incoming Commander-in-Chief John Smart of New Hampshire as well. I am delighted to be here. I am delighted to be here as a veteran, as the Chairman of the Republican Party and as an American. I am also delighted to follow my good friend and a great American, John McCain. Thank you for this privilege to address you on this 100th annual convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the last gathering of our organization in this century.

Just as our great-grandfathers did 100 years ago, those of us who wore the uniform in defense of our flag today stand shoulder-to-shoulder in support of our comrades-in-arms, the wounded, the sick, the aged. We do so in the knowledge, as the VFW motto tells us, that to help the living is the most fitting memorial to honor the dead.

And just as we once marched together into harm's way on the shores of strange and foreign lands, so, too, we march together again today, united in our singular commitment to keep America strong and thereby free. None hate wars more than those of us who fought them. None appreciate the need for America to maintain its military strength more than veterans do. Veterans need not be Republicans nor Democrats. When we join together here as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, just like when we joined together as brothers and sisters in arms, we are Americans first and foremost.

And so today, I address you not just as one who is privileged to head one of our two great political parties in our democracy, but rather I speak to you as a fellow veteran of the Vietnam conflict, an officer who proudly graduated from West Point, and a fellow member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I speak to you also as the father of children I cherish, children I want to keep safe and free. In fact, one of my children enlisted in the Army while he was still in high school. While he was a student at the University of Colorado, he was called up in the Gulf War conflict.

In 1980, right after he was elected, long before inaugural day, President-elect Ronald Reagan called for Cap Weinberger and gave him a simple set of orders. "Prepare for the last great battle of the cold war," he said. "Reclaim America's position of leadership among our friends and allies, and more importantly, respect among our adversaries."

The Soviets had engaged in a massive military build up and America's defenses were at bay. They had been allowed to deteriorate, victims of misplaced trust and naive thinking. Our naval assets were unfit to go to sea. Munitions were inadequate. Enlistments were down, morale

was low. At home and abroad, like a mist, there grew an unease that America had lost its way, that the United States had somehow abandoned its will to lead.

There were those who called him a cowboy. There were those who wanted to reverse his course. But Ronald Reagan never wavered in his determination to restore this nation's military strength. And restore it, he did.

Over the eight years of his presidency, Ronald Reagan so strengthened this nation's defense that within a year of his leaving office, just 29 months after his challenge to "tear down that wall," they did so, as we watched the evil empire brought to its knees.

President Reagan proudly addressed this VFW convention on two different times. He so loved us, so respected what we did for this country, that he elevated the VA to cabinet level status.

Today, he lives out his remaining years in California, the warrior at rest, the victim of a horrible and debilitating disease. He has our prayers and our thanks. Now, we stand in his place. Incredibly, we find ourselves in a situation similar to the one Ronald Reagan encountered two decades ago. Our military, smaller than it was on the morning Adolph Hitler invaded Poland. Forty percent smaller than it was on the morning President Bush left office. Eight fewer combat divisions, twenty fewer air wings. One hundred twenty fewer surface combat ships and attack submarines. A million fewer soldiers, sailors and airmen on active duty and in reserve.

It breaks my heart seeing our own servicemen giving out food to refugees in all parts of the globe, knowing that 13,000 of our own servicemen and women are themselves on food stamps. And it breaks my heart knowing that two-thirds of them live in housing that the Pentagon says is inadequate. And it breaks my heart to see us talk about pouring billions of dollars into rebuilding the Balkans when we still have veterans with unmet medical needs. More than anyone else in our society, we veterans know that prosperity at home, as wonderful as it is, can never make up for strength and purpose abroad.

We owe it to ourselves, to our children, to the memories of those who fought beside us and fell, and to the world, to lead the fight to make America strong again. We must restore America's defenses, rebuild our aging equipment, replace our depleted munitions, and restore pride and morale among our troops. And, most of all, we must build a workable system of missile defenses.

The present administration willingly transferred classified missile-launching technology to Communist China, and through negligence let them steal the secrets needed to load the missiles with nuclear bombs. China can now hit any city in the USA. Yet this administration inexplicably refuses to protect us with a missile defense system. The law calls for building such a system, but it is not being built. The President has said he won't spend a red cent on it. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger said recently that it is "immoral" for a President not to protect his people.

This is still a dangerous world. We have a hollow military with no missile defense. There is no excuse for this. Ronald Reagan said we can only achieve and maintain peace through strength. History teaches that the best way to prevent war is to be well prepared to fight one.

I care so deeply about this nation's readiness that I have devoted an entire issue of our magazine "Rising Tide" to the subject. I hope you will help me. And while we are at it, let's work together to protect our flag from desecration, too.

But beyond preparing for our defense, we must never forget those who fought in yesterday's wars. That's why I am so pleased that the House of Representatives is about to add \$1.7 billion to the President's request for veterans' health-care needs. The added money will help the VA to keep pace, as it strives to improve delivery of quality, state-of-the-art care to veterans at 173 VA hospitals and hundreds of VA clinics and nursing homes.

In addition, this additional money will be a God send in our efforts to provide emergency care for uninsured veterans, and to expand coverage for tests for Hepatitis-B.

Most important, on a system-wide basis at least, these added funds will ensure that no VA health worker will face a layoff on the basis of budgetary needs alone.

But our work for yesterday's soldiers only begins there. Earlier this summer, the House passed the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act to provide much-needed cost-of-living adjustment for pensions and those receiving disability compensation.

Under our "Veterans Small Business Development Act," we will create a new "National Veterans Business Development Center" to promote public and private sector assistance to veterans through small business networks. We will provide special relief to those veterans who are the most seriously disabled who receive military retirement income as well as VA disability payments. That is not enough. We need to do more. But that is a down payment on an immeasurable debt.

It is the 100th birthday of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. It has been 101 years since the motto "Duty, Honor, Country" was adopted by my alma mater, West Point.

Thirty-seven years ago, General Douglas MacArthur returned to West Point, a soldier from one era speaking to those of a new era. He spoke that day about those words, "Duty, Honor, Country."

And on that spring day in 1962, he spoke of the soldiers those men would lead, whether they would be reliable, whether they would be brave, whether they would be capable of victory. He spoke of the American man-at-arms, one of the world's most noblest figures, who needs no eulogy because he has written his own history in red on the enemy's breast.

That American man-at-arms, the one Douglas MacArthur spoke about, is here in this room, still committed to those wonderful words: "Duty, Honor, Country." Still determined that America be strong and caring, 100 years after this organization was formed, to help living men and

women honor those on whose shoulders we all stand.

It is a real honor for me to be here in your presence, just as it was a generation ago in the jungles of Vietnam. Thank you for having me here and God bless you and God bless America.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Jim, I would like to present you with our VFW 100th Anniversary Book and we thank you for coming here today and informing us on veterans' issues. We need to be informed, the election is coming soon and we thank you for helping make our decision.

Comrades, at the beginning of the year John Smart, John Gwizdak and myself talked together about politics and about the election coming up next year and how the VFW members need to be informed on who is with us and who is against us. So we are determined to bring you all the information you ever wanted and more on politicians and politics, so that you can be informed on who is going to support us and who will not.

Then we are going to ask you to go out and be advocates for veterans and talk to those Congressmen and Senators, and talk to that administration about doing the right thing for veterans. So, hence, you have got all sorts of information, and even at this convention and you can continue to give your political information in the process that you can use to help our veterans back in your home states.

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW NEWS MEDIA AWARD, GOLD MEDAL
AND
CITATION TO WILLIAM E. BUTTERWORTH (W.E.B. GRIFFIN)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The VFW News Media Award is presented for outstanding contributions to a better understanding of our military's way of life and its institution through creative and articulate writings.

This year's recipient is W. E. Butterworth, better known by his pen name, W.E.B. Griffin, the author of a series of novels, including "Brotherhood of War", "The Corps" and "Badge of Honor." He is also a member of Gaston-Lee VFW Post No. 5660, Alabama.

Mr. Butterworth has published over 128 books and currently has more than 27 million copies of his novels in print.

Mr. Butterworth served in the U.S. Army from 1946 to 1947. During the Korean War, he was recalled to active duty as a combat correspondent in Korea. On his release from active duty, he was appointed Chief of the Publications Division of the Army Signal Aviation Test and Support Activity at the Army Aviation Center in Fort Rucker, Alabama.

I am pleased to present the 1999 VFW News Media Award to W. E. Butterworth, who through his honest and forthright commentary has contributed to a better understanding of our American military way of life and its institutions.

Please join me in a warm VFW welcome to a great writer and

fellow veteran and a VFW member, W. E. Butterworth.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Citation reads as follows:

"News Media Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to W.E.B. Griffin in sincere appreciation for his outstanding contributions promoting a better understanding of our U.S. military's way of life, and its institutions, through creative and articulate writings. His ability to capture all the drama and challenge of life in uniform and skillfully weave it into a spell-binding story filled with historical accuracy, has earned him the title 'Poet Laureate of the American Military.'

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 18th day August, 1999. Approved by the National Council of Administration." This has been signed by Thomas A. Pouliot, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

REMARKS BY WILLIAM BUTTERWORTH

MR. WILLIAM BUTTERWORTH: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Pouliot. I am a writer and not a speaker, so you will have to bear with me. It should go without saying that I am humbled to be here and I am not at all sure that I deserve this honor. I was a sergeant, always a sergeant, and I have never forgotten that second rule of being a sergeant. The first, of course, is never volunteer for anything, and the second rule is if an officer gives you something you don't think you should have, take it and run and worry about him wanting to take it back later. So I am going to do this and run, and fight like hell from giving it back when they realize they gave it to the wrong man.

I was in Argentina doing research when I learned of this honor. I think that being in a foreign country helps when you are thinking of the United States. When we are here, we don't really pay much attention to all the things that being an American means. Because I was in a Spanish-speaking country, I think that helped me to understand the guys who formed our organization.

The foreign war they were talking about being veterans of in 1899 was the Spanish-American War. When that war started, Spain was a major world power and the United States was not. Then in Cuba, the Buffalo soldiers and Ninth Cavalry, the regulars, the first United States volunteer cavalry under a lieutenant named Teddy Roosevelt, charged up San Juan Hill.

Across the world in Manila Bay, Admiral Dewey said, "You may fire when ready, Gridley," and the U.S. Navy sank the entire Spanish Pacific fleet in little over an hour and lost only one U.S. sailor, and he fell overboard.

When the war was over, the United States was a world power and Spain was not. Maybe because I was in Argentina, or maybe because I am an old man, I thought I was beginning to understand what motivated the

veterans of that foreign war to form our organization 100 years ago.

I was trying to put it in words, and then I realized that somebody had already done them. I took my membership card for the Special Operation Association from my wallet. On the reverse it reads, "You have never lived until you have almost died. Life has a special meaning that the protected will never know."

I think our founders understood that when they started the VFW. They knew with all due modesty that they had done something special, something that would forever set them apart from other men who didn't put on a uniform and go off to a war. They wanted to preserve that special camaraderie of warriors and they wanted to do what they could for families of their fallen comrades, and they wanted to continue to be of service to the country for which they had fought.

I don't think any of them thought, how could they have imagined Chateau de Tourreau or Bataan or Heartbreak Ridge. A century later we would be convened here to mark a century of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a century later that the VFW would be more than two million strong. With all that in my mind, can you imagine how humble and proud I am honored to be by the VFW in this way. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, there is a \$5,000 honorarium that goes with this Gold Medal, and Mr. Griffin has requested that half of that money be donated to his Special Operations Association and the other go to his Gaston-Lee VFW Post 5660.

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW HALL OF FAME AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO MR. DERRICK THOMAS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Derrick Thomas is the son of an Air Force pilot who was killed while flying a B-52 bomber in the Vietnam War. Captain Thomas would be very proud of his son's accomplishments.

A professional football player of extraordinary talent, Derrick has excelled off the playing field as well. Through his Third and Long Foundation, he has established an organization dedicated to fighting illiteracy in America. For children ages nine through thirteen, he has the Reading Club, and Derrick is one of its readers.

He also funds a program that hires teenagers to read to younger children at child-care centers in the Kansas City area. And his Third and Long Foundation also supports the Parent/Teacher Child Mentor Program to bring literacy and parenting skills to entire families.

No one asked him to do this, he volunteered, and that makes him one of us. Here is a man who has sacked John Elway, yet comes off the field and sits down with a child to open a door to the future. Indeed, Derrick Thomas is a man of many talents. On the one hand, chosen by Coach John Madden for his highly acclaimed "All-Madden" team and on the other hand selected by the Boy Scouts of America as a role model.

From the football field at the University of Alabama to the Kansas

City Chiefs' Arrowhead Stadium, Derrick has made football history. His list of achievements and honors on the gridiron are the envy of all who have played the game and the goal of those just starting out.

A most valuable player on the field and a most valuable citizen in everything else he does, Derrick Thomas gives real meaning to the word "volunteer."

Please give a warm VFW welcome to Derrick Thomas of the Kansas City Chief, who is here to receive our VFW Hall of Fame Award for his support of our Operation Uplink program. Please welcome Derrick Thomas.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Citation reads: "Hall of Fame Award, Gold Medal and Citation presented to Derrick Thomas in special recognition of his sincere commitment to the support of veterans and active duty military personnel through his participation in 'Operation Uplink' and for the various community service work, in particular his Third and Long Foundation, which inspires children to dream of success and gives them a chance in life by making them use their minds and exercise their imaginations.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 18th day of August, 1999. Approved by the National Council of Administration." This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

REMARKS BY MR. DERRICK THOMAS

MR. DERRICK THOMAS: Thank you very much. First of all, I would like to thank God for without him none of this would have been possible on the field or off the field. I have pondered for months what I would say at this particular time. On the flight coming back from training camp last night, I thought about, in fact, that I would never forget this day because I was to receive an award that millions and millions of individuals, men and women, have given a sacrifice to make this country what it is today. On the 100th Anniversary, me, a kid from Florida, I never thought I would have the opportunity to receive such an award.

I thank, first of all, Coach Cunningham and Carl Peterson and the Chiefs family for allowing me to get out of practice today and come back here to accept this award. I thank the VFW for scheduling it on a day that we had a pad practice this morning and I really didn't want to do it.

Then I would like to thank the game of football, because the game of football has allowed me to be closer to the VFW and do some things that I would never have had the opportunity to do, which I went to Germany in my second year in the season in the NFL, and I had the opportunity to go to the only free village in Germany, and it was because of the United States that village has actually remained free.

I have had the opportunity to go to Japan on several occasions and

visit, and I have had an opportunity to play golf when I was supposed to be working over there. So football in and of itself has allowed me to do some wonderful things and meet some wonderful people along the way.

Today to receive this award, I think that in a sense I am really not deserving of this award because there are many people that have made the sacrifice and given their lives. I can think of the Vietnam Memorial and speaking on Memorial Day, and looking back at those 58,000 names, my father being one of them, that gave the ultimate sacrifice who were really, really heroes in my eyes, as far as the things that they did for this country to get it to where it is.

Then I think about my program, my foundation and the things I have been able to do and accomplish. We have won many distinguished awards. I would like to thank all the people involved with that, and this award also belongs to you. They made the sacrifice to do things necessary for me to be successful with my program.

I would like to say again thank you to each and every one of you for allowing me to participate in this convention today and selecting me to be the recipient of this award, because it means a great deal to me. I don't know how I would feel if I ever made it to the Football Hall of Fame, but I would have to say that until that day or the day that I get a chance to hold up the Super Bowl Trophy, this is probably the most memorable occasion that I have ever had. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much, Derrick. I would like to present you with the 100th VFW Anniversary Book. In addition to that goes an honorarium for \$5,000, and Derrick asked it be made out to his Third and Long Foundation.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS (Cont'd.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, we will take up again the Report of the Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions. The Chairman is Paul Spera.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, at this time I would like to call to the microphone the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Past Commander-in-Chief R. D. "Bulldog" Smith from Georgia to deal with the Resolutions that are approved, as amended.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF R. D. SMITH: Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Chairman Spera and Delegates to the 100th Anniversary Convention:

I will now proceed to present to you the amendments that the Veterans Service Committee approved, slightly as amended, and when I say "slightly as amended", only one word in many, many instances was changed.

So beginning with Resolution 605, Concurrent Receipt of Retirement Pay and Veterans Disability Compensation. Resolution 608,

Veterans Program to Remain a National Mandate.

Resolution 610 was amended, Third-Party Reimbursement Without Offset.

Resolution No. 611 was amended, Entitlement to Nursing Home Care.

Resolution 613 was amended, Presumption of Service Connection for Radiation Related Disabilities.

Resolution 614 was amended, Support an Effective Veterans Employment and Training Service.

Resolution 615, Commission on Service Members and Veterans' Transition Assistance was also amended.

Resolution No. 617, Funding Fee for VA Home Loans, was amended.

Resolution 619, Support Priority of Service for Veterans to all Federally-Funded Job Training Programs, was amended.

Resolution 620, VA Proposes Permanent Extension of Certain OBRA Provisions, was amended.

Resolution 621, Cost-of-Living Increase for VA Beneficiaries and Military Retirees, was amended.

Resolution No. 625, Support for Gulf War Veterans, was amended.

Resolution No. 629, Specially Adapted Housing Allowance, was amended.

Resolution 633, Research on the Health Effects of Depleted Uranium and Implementation of an Education and Safety Training Program for All Ground Troops, was amended.

Resolution 636 was amended, Amend Internal Revenue Code for State Financial Veterans Home Mortgages.

Resolution 639 was amended, VA Demonstration project for Alzheimer's Facility.

Resolution 640 was amended, VA to Pay Their Fair Share for Veterans Residing in State Veterans Homes.

Resolution 641 was amended, Restore Grant in Aid Hospital Program to the Filipino World War II Veterans in the Philippines.

Resolution 642 was amended, Service Connection for Chronic Peripheral Neuropathy and Diabetes as a Result of Exposure to Agent Orange.

Resolution 645 was amended, Benefits for Filipino Veterans and Scouts who Served with the U.S. Armed Forces During World War II.

Also amended was Resolution 651, Post Exchange and Commissary Privileges for U.S. Military Retirees Residing or Traveling Overseas.

Resolution 652, Veterans Employment Preference with the U.S. Government Overseas, was amended.

Resolution 653, Establish a VA Assistance Office in the Federal Republic of Germany, was amended.

Resolution 660, Mill Springs National Cemetery, was amended.

Resolution 663, Repeal the Reduction of Compensation and Pension for Incompetent Veterans Under Title 38, U.S.C., 5503 (b)(1)(A), was amended.

Also amended was Resolution 664, Increase Funding for Burials at State Cemeteries.

Resolution 667 was amended, Veteran's Preference.

Resolution 672 was amended, Workforce Investment Act.

No. 675, Provide for the Maintenance and Upkeep of the Cemetery at the Former Clark Air Base in the Republic of the Philippines, was also amended.

Resolution 679, Support S.381/H.R. 631, Benefits for Filipino American Veterans of World War II.

Also Resolution 681, Support H.R. 113, to Remove Certain Restrictions on Participation in the Demonstration Project for Medicare-Eligible DoD Beneficiaries Under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.

Also amended was Resolution 685, Support H.R. 500, "The Military Pay and Retirement Reform Act of 1999."

Commander-in-Chief, I move that these Resolutions be adopted as amended.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have a motion. Is there a second?

COMRADE JOHN FERGUS (Department of Tennessee): Comrade Commander-in-Chief John Fergus, Department of Tennessee, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, we have a motion and a second for approval. Would anyone ask that any of these be set aside? Seeing no one at the microphones, the motion is to approve. All those in favor will say "aye"; all opposed. The motion carries.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I will now read the Resolutions that the committee recommends for rejection.

Resolution No. 627, Gulf War Undiagnosed Illnesses, rejected in favor of Resolution 625.

Resolution No. 628, Retain Employment Assistance for Veterans and Disabled Veterans, rejected in favor of Resolution No. 608.

Resolution No. 638, Department of Veterans Affairs Strategic Plan, rejected since the Resolution has been accomplished.

Resolution No. 644, Provide for the Maintenance and Upkeep of the Cemetery at Former Clark Air Base in the Republic of the Philippines, rejected in favor of Resolution 675.

No. 646, the Future of Pershing Hall, rejected because the Resolution has been accomplished.

No. 648, Civil Service Employment Practices Standardization, rejected because it could do more harm to veterans.

No. 649, Postal Privileges for Retirees, rejected because it creates

an inequitable benefit.

No. 655, Mandatory VA Health-Care Including VA Clinic Pharmacies for Military Retirees and Their Dependents, rejected because it mandates non-veteran care in a VA system.

Resolution No. 656, "Notch Babies", rejected because it is not a veterans' issue.

No. 657, Long-Term Care for Veterans at Illinois Nursing Care Facilities, rejected because it is a state issue, which has also been resolved.

No. 658, "Equalize Social Security Benefits - Fix the Notch", rejected as not a veterans' issue.

No. 659, Adequate Funding by VA Medical Centers for All U.S. Veterans, rejected in favor of Resolution No. 603.

No. 661, Equitable Retirement System for All Veterans Employed by Federal Government Agencies, rejected because it is not a federal agency. The Tennessee Valley has veterans preference.

Resolution No. 662, Disability Pay to Retired Military Personnel, rejected in favor of Resolution No. 605.

No. 665, Grand Island Veterans Home Construction, rejected in favor of Resolution No. 640.

No. 666, Scottsbluff Veterans Home Construction, rejected in favor of Resolution No. 640.

Resolution 668, Togo West, Jr., Secretary of VA, Must Go Now, rejected in favor of Resolution 643.

Resolution 669, that the U.S. Government's \$10,000.00 Term Life Insurance Policy be Adjusted as Follows, rejected because the Term Life Insurance has no tax value.

No. 670, Veterans Preference, Veterans Priority of Service and Other Special Considerations in Employment and Training Programs, rejected in favor of Resolution No. 667 and Resolution No. 672.

Resolution No. 671, H.R. 606, was rejected in favor of Resolution No. 614 and Resolution No. 618.

Resolution No. 673, Employee Protection Against Discharge for Seeking Treatment from the VA, rejected because occasional absences are normally acceptable.

Resolution No. 674, Clark Air Force Base, rejected in favor of Resolution 675.

Resolution No. 677, Increase the Budget of the Veterans Employment and Training Service, rejected in favor of Resolution No. 614 and Resolution No. 618.

Resolution No. 678, To Support Cooperation Between the U.S. Department of Labor and the Virginia Employment Commission, rejected in favor of Resolution No. 672.

Resolution 680, Support H.R. 1182, The "Servicemembers Educational Opportunity Act of 1999," was rejected in favor of Resolution No. 702.

Resolution No. 682, Support H.R. 1215, "Veterans American

Dream Home Ownership Assistance Act of 1999," was rejected in favor of Resolution No. 636.

Resolution 683, Support H.R. 648, "Military Retired Pay Restoration Act of 1999," was rejected in favor of Resolution No. 685.

Resolution No. 684, Support H.R. 303, Permit Retired Members of the Armed Forces to Receive Compensation from the VA Concurrently with Retired Pay Without Reduction from Either, was rejected in favor of Resolution No. 605.

Resolution 686, Enact Legislation Allowing Veterans with 50 percent or Greater Disability the Right to the Same Privileges Allowed to Veterans with 100 percent Disability, was rejected because of full rate and was not feasible to amend.

Resolution No. 687, Support S.350, "Military Health Care Improvement Act of 1999," rejected as actually written and was not to be amended.

Resolution 688, Support H.R. 135, "Veterans' Access to Emergency Care Act of 1999," was rejected in favor of Resolution No. 632.

Resolution 690, Support H.R. 1594, Filipino Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 1999, was rejected in favor of Resolution No. 645.

Resolution 691, Use Tobacco Settlement Funds for Veterans Health Care Needs, was rejected as a state's rights issue.

Resolution 692, Analysis of Gulf War Syndrome (GWS) by the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS), rejected because it limits.

Resolution 693, Designate Certain Military Bases as National Cemeteries for Aerial Burials, was rejected because the Resolution has been accomplished.

Resolution 695, Request the California Department of Veterans Affairs to Comply with the Military and Veterans Code to Protect Veterans, was rejected as a state's rights issue.

Resolution 696, Field Service Officers Part-Time Paid Employees, rejected. The Department has already accomplished the Resolution.

Resolution 704, Requesting the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to Establish a Program for Veterans who have Biological, Chemical Neurological, Radiological, Stress Producing Conditions While in the Military Service, was rejected in favor of Resolution No. 625.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, that concludes the listing of the Resolutions recommended for rejection.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Are there any that you would like to have set aside?

I recognize Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE ALLEN MILLIUS (Post 1599 - Pennsylvania): I move that Resolution 658 be set aside for adoption.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The comrade has asked that Resolution 658 be set aside. At this time we have a motion to adopt Resolution 658. Is there a second? Hearing no second, the motion dies.

Thank you, comrades.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE MICHAEL DePAULO (Post 5988 - Maine): I move that we set aside Resolution 668.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Mike, this is the proper time to make a motion to adopt. Will you make a motion to adopt?

COMRADE MICHAEL DePAULO (Post 5988 - Maine): Oh, yes. I am sorry, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. I move we adopt Resolution No. 668.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have a motion to adopt Resolution 668. Is there a second?

COMRADE JIM LONGONDY (Post 1386 - New York): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have a motion and a second.

The chair recognizes for the purpose of discussion Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JIM LONGONDY (Post 1386 - New York): Comrades, as the maker of this Resolution, the intent was to bring this to the attention of the National Organization. We just went through a period of time through Derwinski when he was the VA Acting Secretary. We had a movement to force the man out of office, and now we are back to the same position where we have an unqualified man running this Department.

I have belonged to this organization for 32 years and I hope that I know well enough to see the leadership of this organization to have the guts that the World War II veterans had, and enact this Resolution and to let Washington know that the politicians are stripping away our benefits. That is all I have to say. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE MICHAEL DePAULO (Post 5988 - Maine): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I have a wealth of experience with the VA. I have had the pleasure of working with former Secretary Jesse Brown. I have been totally ignored as all of us that are VSO, VAVS reps, deputies from Togo West.

There are a few things that I think that the body needs to understand. Dr. Kenneth Kizer is now gone, I believe, as the Under Secretary of Health. We had a lengthy conversation before he left, and this is what he told me. He told me that I could use it here.

He said Secretary West informed me that he would not accompany, him to the White House to explain in real medical terms, the \$1.7 billion needed to just keep things afloat and the \$3.2 billion needed to make it right.

Secondly, Dr. Kizer explained that the Office of the Management and Budget has been trying to discredit me and get rid of me for at least five years, and I will be gone and they have finally succeeded. He said, "I leave

with a heavy heart and with a great sense of whether or not the VA health-care system will survive."

Dr. Kizer's letter was at our Washington Conference, he was quoted by you, Chief, and by everyone who gave testimony the week I was there for the hearings. None of this ever happened with Secretary Brown. Dr. Kizer, the Under Secretary of Health, always accompanied the Secretary so he could explain the real needs of what the money was used for or needed for.

The Memorial Day of 1999, if any of you saw C-Span, you saw a representation of 375,000 that called for the removal of "do nothing" Togo West as Secretary. I want to remind the delegates here that politicians are quick to say we are at peace and we don't have any wars. I will tell you, in my opinion, the purchasers of that peace are the veterans of the United States, and those of our allies, and the very border that binds this republic's foundation is nothing less than the blood of about a million and one-half of us who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Never in the history of nations have so many millions and so many generations have owed it all, I mean absolutely all, to those men and women who answered the call of this republic, the citizens, soldiers and the professional soldiers, and we want our health-care and we want Togo gone.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROBERT WALLACE (Post 1851 - New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and comrades, I stand in opposition to the approval of Resolution 668. Secretary Derwinski's name was mentioned a few minutes ago. Probably one other individual in this room, if he is still here, that went through the Derwinski battle closer than I did, because he was the leader of the organization at that time

I can tell you from a personal note Togo West is not an Ed Derwinski. Togo West's problems are different problems. A section of this VFW membership and the leadership, he is not an advocate for veterans. We agree on that. He has not stood up for us. We agree on that. My comrades, there are two things that are happening.

Number one, Togo West has said publicly he will be gone by the end of the year. He has said that when the 2001 budget is submitted he will be gone. He has said that privately and in a group of five individuals. I had the good fortune of being one of those five individuals that heard him say that. He has said that on national news. What do we accomplish by saying that Togo must be gone now? He already has said he is going to be gone.

The second thing that was done, unprecedented in my VFW career, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief and the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of this organization put forth the Resolution, and the Resolution is No. 643, which you adopted.

That Resolution very clearly says hold the Administration and

Congress accountable. It says, "Be It Resolved, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call on this Administration and Congress to make veterans a priority with not only words, but with proper funding that will allow veterans access to quality health care in a timely manner; and

"Be It Further Resolved, that the VFW Commander-in-Chief take whatever action and measures he may deem necessary with the Administration, the Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs to insure that all VA programs for veterans and their dependents are fully funded and operational."

My comrades, you have reaffirmed in this Resolution what you feel the Commander-in-Chief should do, and this was put forth by our incoming Commander-in-Chief and our incoming Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. I urge you to reject Resolution 668 and let those two individuals and the third member of the team that will be elected on Friday do what is best for the Veterans of Foreign Wars and do what we elected them to do, and that is to represent us in the halls of the Congress and do what is right for veterans. I urge you to reject Resolution 668. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

I recognize Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RON FRY (Post 992 - Washington): I don't think that we can afford to take Togo West at his word for one minute, let alone to wait until that budget is passed. He has already demonstrated in a meeting, and I believe you were present or you got information on the meeting, in February of 1999 when Bob Stump and several Congressmen were asking Togo West why out of all the federal agencies that the VA had received no funds out of the government surpluses, but all of the other agencies had?

Mr. West's reply, if I can remember it correctly, was that he didn't believe we needed the funds. Now, we are talking about the head of the VA system, and if this man makes a statement like that, which he did do, obviously, he has not been out to these hospitals and visited with these veterans or the medical staff that is taking care of them.

Because by and large, the care being given to our veterans is disgraceful and it has been done under this man for the past three years. His response was that he supports the Administration's budget. He is not a veterans' advocate, he is not a man that cares for veterans at all. He is simply a man that is going to lick the boots, and if I offend anyone, I apologize, of his superior. So I move that we approve this Resolution. Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

For the purpose of summation, the chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE MICHAEL DePAULO (Post 5988 - Maine): I think, first of all, I want to say to the comrade that preceded me is right on. Also, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, as you well know from your visit to VA-Boston and a rather lengthy conversation with the Medical Director,

Michael Lawson, there is only one problem in the VA right now and that is money, and it is affecting the morale and affecting the care.

I don't know about the rest of my comrades, I am a full-time volunteer. I have my own office, my own phone and my own computer. I will tell you, I handle anywhere from two to three calls a day. You can check with the folks in the Washington office on how many times I have had people call the 800 number right in my office.

What adopting this Resolution does, it may not have the impact that something will happen today, but I guarantee you whoever comes into the White House or is elected as the next Commander-in-Chief is going to have a little ringing in his ear that says we, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the delegates at this convention, that we are not going to accept incompetent, untrained, substandard individuals to head up the Department of Veterans Affairs. That is just what Secretary West is here.

Now, I didn't come prepared to give you facts and figures about who sat for four days because I don't know how double amputees that were shot from the shoulder on the 27th ward. I have got scores of reports he was not cleaned up, problems like that.

We have double amputees for the United States Navy and other cases. I can tell you right now I have been in my job doing what I do at the VA Medical Center for 13 or 14 years now, and I have seen it go from not too good to bad, to absolutely deplorable, and it is an absolute shame, it is a crime and it is a sin. Thank you, Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade.

For summation, the chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROBERT WALLACE (Post 1851 - New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and comrades, please, it is very clear I am not a member of Togo's fan club for President, but what I am is someone who would elect the leaders of this organization to do what is right for this organization.

What I am is a believer on what is going to happen on Friday when the new century of service takes over. What I am is a believer of what each and every one of you have heard from the incoming Commander-in-Chief as he has traveled this country.

What I am is an individual who believes that the ringing in the ears are not only going to be in the presidential candidates' ears but it is also going to be in the congressional candidates' ears around the country as a result of our Commander-in-Chief to be has set out as his platform and has set out as his agenda.

My comrades, give the national officers you elect on Friday the authority to do what we want them to do and what is right for veterans. Reject Resolution No. 668. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrade. We will move the question. The motion is to approve Resolution 668. All those in favor will say "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it.

Are there any other motions to adopt? Seeing no one at the

microphones, the rest of those Resolutions are rejected.

INTRODUCTION OF BRIGADIER GENERAL WILMA VAUGHT,
WOMEN IN MILITARY SERVICE FOR
AMERICA MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, in 1986, Congress authorized the construction of a memorial in Washington, D.C., that would be a lasting tribute to the women who have served and sacrificed in our nation's armed forces, from the Revolutionary War to the present.

The driving force behind this magnificent memorial was a woman with vision, determination and follow through, the qualities of a great leader and a beneficial instrument to our society. She is Retired Brigadier General Wilma L. Vaught, United States Air Force.

The contribution of women to national security throughout our nation's history has and continues to be of inestimable value and deserves the recognition which General Vaught has strived for for so many years.

Please join me in a very warm welcome for a fellow VFW member and the President of the Women's Memorial, Brigadier General Wilma Vaught.

General Vaught.

REMARKS BY BRIGADIER GENERAL WILMA VAUGHT, USAF (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL VAUGHT: Thank you very much, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. In 1998 we had 170,000 visitors including many from the VFW. When you come to this memorial, I think you will find that a different kind of people, a living memorial. It is a memorial where we remember those who have served.

It is a memorial where we give recognition to those that served and that are serving today. As I think about that, I think particularly of one person. We have one individual I think of, Betty Jean Hansmiller, who served during World War II from 1942 to 1947 in the Navy Nurse Corps. To show you an example of what this memorial means to our women, she wrote in a little memoir that she put together.

"These dramatic events of which I was a part were put away in my mind, forgotten and they surfaced but not discussed. It was not until the recognition of the Women in Military Service Memorial that I became aware of these memories once again. Writing about my past brings such memories to life. Perhaps there is healing in there for me and, indeed, I never recognized as I took on the pain and suffering of others. I cried my tears for them that were never before shed as I wrote my story.

"In looking back, some areas of distress never to be brought to sever a word. Severely burned patients, there is an odor about that that clings to you. Overseas we didn't have equipment to air condition the

wards to free us of the odor.

"The nurse who worked the night duty with me in the psychiatric ward became suicidal and a psychiatric patient herself. A patient who hung himself in the bathroom, I found him, and the psychiatric patients who were experiencing battles and scars of war. A patient who slit his wrist and died, I was not on duty but I cared for him during the day. It makes an impact. Amputees, most of the men were very grateful, a positive help to others."

She went through her life carrying the burden of this grief and stress, and at that time we didn't think women were tough enough in anything like that. She never got any help. Now, relief has come to be able to tell the story. The memorial is also a place of meaning and ceremony.

We have had many promotions, retirements and even memorial remembrances there. It is a place of education and learning, because this is the place where we tell the story of women who gave service to the nation, and that began with the American Revolution.

We have all kinds of educational-type projects. We have speakers coming in, like Cokie Roberts, Tom Brokaw and others. We sell more books written by and about the women that served in the military than anyone else. I am here today to ask your help in three different ways.

First of all, when you come to Washington, D.C., I hope you will come and visit this memorial so that you can see what it is like. And I would send an invitation to you that during your mid-year conference in February, as you go there to go to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, that you stop and tell your members to visit this memorial.

Secondly, there has been 1.8 million women that served our country. We have only found about 400,000, perhaps 500,000 of those women. So there is about a million yet, over a million yet to be found. You are out there in the communities of America where you can help us find those women and as you talk and hear of a woman that served the military, find out if she is registered and if she knows there is even a memorial in her honor. Almost daily I find people who don't know about it.

Third, I want to speak to you about money, because I am still a fund-raiser. I wish we had the memorial all paid for. We don't. I would just like to comment as a lifetime member of the VFW that I am disappointed by the fact that between the American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, the VFW Auxiliary and the VFW, that yours is the only organization of those four which has not yet given \$150,000 to have a niche with your name on it. The other three have already qualified now.

You have given a total to date of \$128,172.20. That is an increase since last year of \$10,360. The VFW Auxiliary, in contrast, has given over \$150,000. I would ask you to match what the women have done. Yes, this is a women's memorial, and you might say, "Well, it ought to be the women that support it." But the women we are honoring and recognizing are veterans, just the same as any other veteran. I ask you to go back to your Posts, your Districts, your Departments, and you think about this and you

give it your support. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Wilma, I would like to present you with this commemorative 100th Anniversary Book for attending and addressing our convention.

At this time the Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions has completed their work and I dismiss the committee. I thank them for their long and arduous job and a job well done.

INSURANCE WINNERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We will now have the drawing for the insurance winners.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL MAHER: The winners for today are Bernard Gaekre, Post 388, Wisconsin, for \$25.

For \$50, Ronnie L. Davis, Post 1618, Tennessee.

The \$100 winner is Ralph R. Schoen of Post 3580, Illinois.

BENEDICTION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrade Chaplain, we will have the Benediction.

(Whereupon, Chaplain Father Neville gave the Benediction at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: I will now recess this meeting until 8:30 tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the session was recessed at 11:55 o'clock a.m.)

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION
THURSDAY MORNING, AUGUST 19, 1999

(The Third Business Session of the 100th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the H. Roe Bartle Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri, was called to order at 8:30 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief Pouliot presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Sergeant-at-Arms, we will have our Opening Ceremonies.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Thomas W. Neville gave the Opening Prayer, followed by the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance.)

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, I call this Third Business Session of our 100th National Convention to order.

At this time we will have the Report of the Credentials Committee.

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): Commander-in-Chief, I am Richard Trombla, Chairman of the Credentials Committee and a member of Post 1174, Kansas. Comrades, this temporary report as of last night. The total delegate count is 13,158. We have 51 Department Commanders and 31 Past Commanders-in-Chief. National Officers, 38. That is for a grand total of 14,278.

Comrades, I wish the Department Commanders of Oregon and Rhode Island would please come see me because they have not registered yet. Please check with the Credentials Committee.

INTRODUCTION OF HELEN PUTNAM BLACKWELL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, much of what we are today is due to the foresight and determination of one man, a veteran of the Spanish-American War, and a man who was one of the founders of the VFW, James Putnam. We are most fortunate to have with us today his daughter, Helen Putnam Blackwell for the purposes of a presentation.

Ms. Putnam.

MS. HELEN PUTNAM: Good morning, comrades. Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot, National Officers and Distinguished Members of the VFW:

First, I would like to congratulate each of you who have worked so hard to make this 100th Anniversary celebration the extraordinary success we have all enjoyed — a special event to remember.

In honor of my father, James C. Putnam, founder and first

Commander-in-Chief of the VFW, our family has prepared a history of his life. It includes such items as newspaper articles, public records, correspondence and pictures that chronicle the life of a man who traveled the world in search of adventure.

It clarifies and defines through press accounts and correspondence his role in 1899 as founder of the fledgling organization, American Veterans of Foreign Service, the predecessor to the present-day VFW. It includes the origin of the dreams and ideas which formed the foundation for that organization.

Putnam was a soldier, railroad engineer, fire fighter, veterans' organizer, farmer, labor organizer, steam and pipe fitter, farmers' organizer and a school teacher. He was active in community, church and Masonic activities. He was also a member of the House of Representative for Howell County, Missouri, for three terms. Quite an accomplishment for a man of his day.

Putnam devoted 57 years working for the VFW before he passed away in 1956. Though often unknown to the leadership of the VFW at the time, Putnam was always in the background organizing new Posts and helping to further the cause of the organization wherever he went, at home or abroad.

His widow, Eva Putnam, worked alongside him during his lifetime and continued working, holding local, district and state offices until her death in 1974. His son, Bill, and myself both signed up during World War II and are lifetime members.

I have assisted National by providing information from my dad's records. I have also served in local, district and state offices, having been President of the Department of Arkansas during 1992-'93. My daughter, Vicki Blackwell Norvell, is a lifetime member of Ladies Auxiliary Post 2722 in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The Putnam family has devoted 100 years combined service to the VFW.

In honor of James C. Putnam, founder and the first Commander-in-Chief of the VFW, I am pleased to present to Commander-in-Chief Pouliot this book describing the most interesting and significant event in my father's life.

Vicki and I hope you will find the contents both interesting and informative and we wish you the best. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, this is a very thick file and a book on James C. Putnam. I know that it is very informative and gives you a lot of information about one of our founders, that many of us don't know. And you will have the opportunity to read this at our National Headquarters so our comrades, when they come through our National Headquarters, they will get a chance to find out some more information about what our founder was like. I want to thank Helen for a very fine gift. Thank you very much.

INTRODUCTION OF COLONEL RUFUS L. FORREST, JR.,
COMMANDER, 190TH AIR REFUELING WING

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: I would like to now introduce Colonel Rufus L. Forrest, Jr., Vice-Commander of the 190th Refueling Wing, Forbes Field, Topeka, Kansas.

With our military forces stretched far and thin, the VFW is increasing its support for those who served to protect what we fought for and many of our friends have died for. Those who serve today hold a very precious heritage in their hands, a heritage of freedom and democracy.

Now, for his presentation, Colonel Forrest.

PRESENTATION BY COLONEL RUFUS FORREST

COLONEL RUFUS FORREST: They told me I had three to five minutes and I will be brief and to the point. I stand before you in awe of what this organization does for America. I was able to come before you with a very meager gift in appreciation for not just the Kansas National Guard but for every man and woman who served this great nation in the National Guard.

There are probably a half million people out there that recognize that through service that serve in the National Guard, that is service to our nation, to our state and to our community. It is a symbolic thing, this little phone card that got me to come to the VFW. But the Uplink initiative in Kansas, in the last six months, means a lot, because my unit has probably been deployed probably 110 days to support Operation Northern Watch.

We caught ten days of allied force while there. We also have guardsmen in Kuwait, Bosnia and all the world serving this great nation. So when I read your Web site before I came in the last couple of weeks to make this simple presentation, there is a little part on the banner of the 100th Anniversary that says, "We'd Do Anything For This Country." I firmly believe that.

I am a Life Member of VFW Post 11555, Topeka, Kansas. I am proud of this life membership. I will ask the Commander to step up, please. The inscription says, "Presented to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in appreciation for your outstanding support from the men and women of the 190th Refueling Wing of the Kansas National Guard. Congratulations to your 100 years of service to our country."

I present this to our Commander and with great pride that we can serve this nation and these veterans before us, those of our comrades who have passed on. This is in humble appreciation for what you do for this nation and this country.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Colonel, on behalf of the VFW, I will be pleased to accept this, and it is presented to the VFW and will go in our museum also so all of our comrades can appreciate it when they come through our National Headquarters.

I would like to present to you one of our VFW 100th Anniversary Books. Thank you very much for coming by and thank you for that testimony on those Uplink calling cards. That is a program that we are very proud of and a program that in some tangible way we can express to our active military that we care about them, we are concerned about them and we think they are doing a great job. Thank you for coming by.

COLONEL RUFUS FORREST: I will compliment the organization, because before I walked in the parking lot to the building I had seven people try to recruit me in the VFW. I appreciate it very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: You know, this year we have been promoting recruiting and trying to impress on our membership how important it is to recruit and how proud we are with the people who are recruiters in our organization. It sounds like the word is out and everyone is trying to be the recruiter of the VFW. Thank you and keep up the good work. I am proud of you.

INTRODUCTION OF COMRADE JAMES CHANCELLOR

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: At this time we would like to welcome James Chancellor, a Vietnam veteran and a VFW member of Post 5365, Indiana, who is here to present a military service ring he designed and created, in recognition of those who have served in our armed forces, to Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Smart. Please give a warm welcome to James Chancellor. (Applause)

PRESENTATION BY COMRADE JAMES CHANCELLOR

COMRADE JAMES CHANCELLOR: Good morning, friends. Thank you very much for allowing me to speak to you today to make this very special presentation. Happy anniversary to all here on the 100th Anniversary. It takes a very special organization to reach the milestone, especially one that has been like the VFW. It is one who has taken on fight after fight or the battle for veterans' rights.

As I stand before you today, I want to tell you I am proud to be here and I am very proud to be a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. In the past, I have spoken to you about different things. I have talked to you about our need to unite. I have spoken to our leadership about taking down the road blocks or stumbling blocks to welcome all veterans into our organization.

I have also talked to you about the spirit of the warrior. I believe that we are all the same. I believed it when I said it and I believe it as I stand before you now. It didn't matter if you fought, where you fought or what time you fought, from Flanders Field to Gettysburg, from Gettysburg to Korea, from Korea to Vietnam, and then to the sands of Desert Storm. We are all the same. We are a kindred brother. I believed that then and I believe it now.

I also talked to you about the torch, the passing of the torch and how proud I was of our leadership to get that role year after year after year. I have talked to you about the Bible. I would like to have you stand with me and fight together. It is a fight for right over wrong.

This fight will not be fought with bullets or guns or ammunition or ground troops. It won't be an easy fight nor will it be a quick one. This is a fight I want you to stand with me and fight against violence in our schools and hatred amongst our children. This is a fight that we must not overlook and we must win.

We need to educate our youth on the violence of war. We need to teach them of our concerns about war, so they will not bring their war experiences into their own world, and believe me it is a war. It is a war in our streets, it is a war in our inner cities, and it is a war all across America. We must and we will win this together.

I remember growing up with my father, and he talked to me about his experiences. He wanted me to learn from his failures. There was no need for me to go through life with trials and tribulations. He told me I should learn from his failures. This is how we should educate our youth.

I remember my mother hugging me as I cried through one of life's trials. She said she wished she could take my pain. She knew what I was going through. She wished that she could take it away. This again is how we need to educate our youth on the violence of war.

We, as wartime veterans, have experienced the sacrifice and the suffering and pain of war. Our children and our families need not experience this. There is no need for violence in our schools, because you, as the wartime veteran, have the experience of life.

There is no need for drive-by shootings. Ask any veteran who has been to war about the suffering of innocent families. We know this. As a nation, we cannot tolerate it. Wars, violence and wars need to be educated to our youth. We need to share it with them. I ask you to take the responsibility of the educator and go to them.

Try to make them understand. Talk to them, and they love to understand. This is not a brand new program I bring to you. It has been done in the past. Someone has come before us and sacrificed so we might be free. The Lord Jesus Christ came many, many years ago and made those sacrifices so we might be free.

I ask you to take this to our youth, demand that they listen to you. Educate them about the violence of war. Tell them they need not ruin their life by violence and hatred and emotionally cripple our communities and families across the United States. This has already been done.

War knows no boundaries. It is either fight or die. In a fight, there are no rules. We, as wartime veterans, have taken the lives of innocent children. We have destroyed communities and families. We have done this in the defense of our freedom.

So if we can educate our youth through our experience there will be no need to destroy family after family after family. They must

understand, they must learn from you. Please take it upon yourself to teach them, to educate them, and then perhaps if we can reach only a minor portion of them, they will see that it is not necessary to bring this violence and hatred into our world.

I ask you to please volunteer for your communities and volunteer to go to our schools and educate our children. Raise your hand, accept the leadership role once again to fight against violence and hatred.

Again, I want to close with congratulating you on your 100th Anniversary. It has taken a desire to succeed and dedication of the veterans to get us where we are today. It is the firm leadership of the VFW that is willing to make choices in this and that leadership that is going to take us into the next millennium.

Thank you for your time, ladies and gentlemen. I am proud to honor a veteran of Vietnam, a leader in the VFW, John W. Smart. I present you this ring.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Jim, thank you so much for sharing those words with us. I can assure you, sir, that as you look before you, you see an organization that has donated over \$243 million to veterans service. They are the ones that have been in the battlefield and I will assure you they will be in the battlefields once again. Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Smart assumed the chair.)

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN MOON

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: His theme was "Courage Under Fire," and as the VFW National Commander-in-Chief, 1997-1998, he brought our organization through all the challenges with flying colors.

John E. Moon, of Grover Hill, Ohio, joined the VFW in 1970 at VFW Post 5665, Sherwood, Ohio. He moved rapidly through the chairs, displaying unusual leadership qualities. In 1975, he joined VFW Post 2873, and served three terms as Post Commander, twice earning the distinction of All State Post Commander. He served 14 years as the Post Adjutant.

At the Department level, John served on many committees, including the POW-MIA and the Ohio Caravan that visits the VFW National Home every year. In 1987-1988, he received All-American Department Commander honors, and then went on to a two-year term on the VFW National Council of Administration.

During his military career, he served in Vietnam with the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Division. He came home with the Vietnam Service Medal with three Bronze Stars, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, Republic of Vietnam Civil Actions Unit Citation, and a

Combat Action Ribbon. John served and served well.

During his year as Commander-in-Chief, he faced many challenges, including a underfunded Department of Veterans Affairs, a steadily declining American military power, and threats against America from hostile countries around the world.

He met with VFW members across America and around the world, encouraging them to keep up our strength through active membership recruiting, and bolstered the spirits of active duty troops by showing them VFW support through active campaigning for better pay and quality of life issues, and the VFW Operation Uplink phone cards.

Here to receive the VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation, Past Commander-in-Chief John E. Moon of VFW Post 2873, Grover Hill, Ohio.

Please give him a warm VFW welcome.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Citation reads as follows:

"Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief, 1997-98, in sincere appreciation and special recognition of his total dedication and commitment to the highest ideals of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and his continuing efforts in support of its programs and purposes. Through his exceptional leadership during the 1997-98 administrative year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars displayed 'Courage Under Fire' in battling for the rights of our nation's veterans.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 18th day of August, 1999." It has been signed by Thomas A. Pouliot, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN E. MOON

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I would like to bring to the microphone my dear wife, Susie. You know, so long during the years that I was campaigning, I would run through the script so quickly I would forget to usually thank someone. Before you today, I want to thank the guiding light that I had in my life to give me the opportunity to serve this organization so long and in every different capacity, and that is my wife, Susie.

There are so many people to thank for this opportunity to serve. I guess I start with my Post, my District, my Department, the great State of Ohio. They gave me the opportunity through so many challenges, over seven and one-half years of campaigning.

They gave me opportunity to serve because they had so much fight in them to give me that extra courage and strength that I needed. I think that is why you gave me "Courage Under Fire" after seeing those individuals in the State of Ohio fighting every bit of the way helping me get elected.

We had a lot of outside challenges that came in from the Big Ten

to try to stop the election. We stayed the course and we won. To those great people in the State of Ohio, I will forever be thankful for your efforts, your consideration, and your kindness to give me this position of great honor.

I have so many other individuals to thank, but last year Joe Ridgley and the Quartermaster General's staff were outstanding in allowing me to observe. Larry Rivers and his staff gave me so much guidance and encouragement. All of these individuals, the Washington office, the Kansas City office, all of them worked hard to see that I would have the opportunity to have a great year. They will never know the appreciation from me that has been untold in my heart forever.

Another individual I single out is Jim Nier. While he was busy campaigning and getting ready for his year as Commander-in-Chief, in traveling all over the country and world, he had time to sit down with me and give me some help and assistance. Even when he was the Commander-in-Chief, he would sit down and work with me so that the errors he made or the things he thought would be very beneficial to me, he would give me guidance and help on it. Jim, I am forever thankful for your support.

To all of you, the effort to serve you, the "Courage Under Fire" team, has meant so much to me and my family, and I will treasure it forever. Thank you very much.

INTRODUCTION OF COMRADE RAY SISK

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The Veterans of Foreign Wars is a proud co-sponsor of the National Veterans Golden Age Games. The success of this year's game is the result of a lot of hard work by hundreds of VA and VFW employees and volunteers.

The 1999 Golden Age Games were held in Geneva, New York, with 451 participants. It is my pleasure to introduce a Past Department Commander and former National Council of Administration member from the State of California, this year's VFW Chairman of the National Veterans Golden Age Games, Ray Sisk.

RESPONSE - COMRADE RAY SISK

COMRADE RAY SISK (Department of California): Thank you, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John. Certainly, to the staff and to you, my comrades, it is a pleasure to have served as a representative at the National Veterans Golden Age Games held in Geneva, New York, and through the past years as the National Coordinator for these games.

On behalf of the VFW, I accepted an award from the VA that I certainly at this time would like to pass on to our Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. This is an award to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for co-sponsoring the 13 National Veterans Golden Age Games. It is signed by Togo West, Jr., Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Comrade Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, I would like to pass this on to where it belongs. Also, we were very fortunate to have gotten in the mail yesterday a tape, and the staff was kind enough to transfer that tape into beta to show a little bit about the Golden Age Games here today.

Many of you Departments are not aware of what these games are, but we have been a co-sponsor in the VFW for the last six years of these games. They really light up the lives of many of our senior veterans that are in the VA and the VA Outpatient Clinics.

Without further ado, I would like for you all to see where our money is spent as co-sponsor of these National Veterans Golden Age Games. If we could, we will now show the video now.

(Whereupon, the video on the Golden Games was shown at this time.)

COMRADE RAY SISK (Department of California): Thank you very much, Senior Commander-in-Chief, to allow us to show the video. Thank you for your participation in the games. All of you that don't have a patient that goes to these games, you certainly need to speak to the closest VA, the VA Outpatient Clinic, and be your very best to sponsor a patient for these games.

We have over 1,200 volunteers from the VA and the VFW for these games in Geneva, New York. Next year the games will be very close to here in Topeka, Kansas, in the year 2000. They have a booth out there and we encourage you to drop by and please buy a Golden Age pin for next year. Thank you for allowing us the time this morning.

PRESENTATION OF THE JAMES C. GATES DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD TO GREGORY V. WHITE

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Ray. It is now my distinct honor to present the prestigious James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award to Gregory V. White of Copperas Cove, Texas.

Gregory White has established a reputation for excellence, leadership and dedication to veterans' interests in his community. As the local veterans employment representative for the Copperas Cove local office, he was directly responsible for 19 job developments, 12 placements per month and 35 case management cases, all of these being twice the state local veterans and employment representative average.

His diligence has created a level of superior performance providing services to all veterans by his entire office. Additionally, his efforts on behalf of disabled veterans seeking employment show a 67-percent success ratio.

Comrades, I now present to you a gentleman whose efforts have enhanced the Veterans Employment Service in the State of Texas and has gone that extra mile for our nation's veterans. Please give a warm VFW welcome to Gregory V. White.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Citation reads: "Veterans of

Foreign Wars of the United States, James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award presented to Gregory V. White, Local Veterans Employment Representative, Texas Workforce Commission, Copperas Cove, Texas, in recognition of extraordinary achievement and exceptional leadership in advancing employment opportunities for our nation's veterans and distinguished service in promoting the goals and objectives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States." This has been signed by Thomas A. Pouliot, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE BY MR. GREGORY V. WHITE

MR. WHITE: First of all, let me congratulate the VFW and its membership on 100 years of continued service to veterans and families in accordance with the way it affects them. I feel very privileged to be here. I am being recognized for something that I truly love doing.

In Texas, veterans are priority when it comes to employment service. We plan to keep it that way. Congratulations, and I am sure you will do well going into that second 100 years. Thank you.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Greg, on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, an honorarium of \$1,000 is given to you, and on behalf of our Commander-in-Chief, Tom Pouliot, I present you with the VFW 100 Years of Service book.

PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL LARGE EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD TO ITT FEDERAL SERVICES CORPORATION

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The Veterans of Foreign Wars is now honored to bestow its Large Employer of the Year Award to ITT Federal Services Corporation, Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

ITT Federal Services Corporation employs 314 people of which 209, or 66.5 percent are military veterans. Of the 73 disabled persons employed, all of them are disabled veterans. This exemplifies ITT's commitment to a practice which includes preference to veterans, primarily disabled veterans.

ITT Federal Services Corporation has shown dedication and economic loyalty in supporting the local community by hiring veterans since ITT is the largest employer in the community. Please give him a warm VFW welcome.

Accepting the award for ITT Federal Services Corporation is its project manager, Sterling Richardson.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Resolution reads, "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, National Large Employer of the Year Award presented to ITT Federal Services Corporation, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in recognition and grateful appreciation for meritorious service in effecting a very comprehensive policy toward the recruitment, employment and

promotion of veterans."

This has been signed by the Commander-in-Chief, Thomas A. Pouliot, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - MR. STERLING RICHARDSON

MR. RICHARDSON: We are, as was stated, a 300-person project in Fort Sill doing base operations as contractor for transportation, supply and maintenance. Now, that means because of the skills that we are looking for we are going to have a lot of veterans in the Department at Fort Sill. That is not the only reason we have a lot of veterans at that work force.

We have a lot of veterans because military experience gives them the ethics to come to work every day, to work hard, to be focused, to be disciplined, to be honest, and in this day, it is very important, drug free. In other words, be the kind of employee that everyone is looking for.

So on their behalf, I am proud to be here and receive this award. I am getting a \$1,000 check, but I am not keeping that. I am a federal contractor and I couldn't get away with that. As a veteran myself, I am proud to be here with you, and I again am proud to receive this award on behalf of our employees. Thank you.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Here is the honorarium for \$1,000 and I would like to present to you on behalf of the Commander-in-Chief our VFW First 100 Years of Service book.

MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL SMALL EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD TO RAYTHEON AEROSPACE COMPANY

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: It is now my honor to present the VFW National Small Employer of the Year Award to Raytheon Aerospace Company, Wichita Falls, Texas, in recognition of its outstanding achievements in hiring, promoting and training veterans.

Raytheon Aerospace Company is committed to hiring the older worker, disabled individuals and veterans. The company has established an enviable record in providing employment to veterans. Veterans comprise 86.5 percent of the employees and the range of veterans spans from the Korean War to Desert Storm, including disabled veterans. Of the 19 persons hired last year, 17, or 89.5 percent are veterans.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is honored to present the National Small Employer of the Year Award to Raytheon Aerospace Company. Accepting the award is the Contract Program Manager, Charles M. Boster.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Citation reads, "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, National Small Employer of the Year Award, presented to Raytheon Aerospace Company, Wichita Falls, Texas, in recognition and grateful appreciation for meritorious service in effecting a

very comprehensive policy toward the recruitment, employment and promotion of veterans." It has been signed by Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot, and Adjutant General John J. Senk, Jr.

RESPONSE - MR. CHARLES BOSTER

MR. BOSTER: Good morning. I am truly honored to be here this morning to accept this award. First, I would like to thank all of the people of the VFW and thank you for your hospitality. A special thanks goes out to Mr. Buddi Harlan of the Texas delegation who met us at the airport yesterday and chauffeured us over to the hotel. This is a bigger town than I am from, and we wanted to make sure we didn't get lost.

In Europe, during World War I, and in Europe and the Pacific during World War II, in Korea, Vietnam, Beirut, Panama, Grenada, in the Middle East during the Gulf War, Somalia, Bosnia and now Kosovo, America's men and women were called upon to serve, responded well.

They sacrificed a lot. They performed well during those campaigns and they were successful in support of our country. When they returned from those foreign places and leave the military service, some companies see it as an obligation to provide these well-trained and disciplined people with employment.

At Raytheon Aerospace, we don't see it as an obligation. We feel that it is an honor to provide these fine American men and women with employment after they have served their country so well. On behalf of Raytheon Aerospace worldwide employees, and especially those Raytheon Aerospace employees at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas, I can only say thank you. Thank you very much.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Once again, Charles, on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars there is an honorarium for \$1,000, and also if you will accept our VFW First Century of Service book.

MR. CHARLES BOSTER: Thank you so much.

PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL LOCAL OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AWARD

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We are now honored to recognize the Cumberland County Fayetteville JobLink Career Center of Fayetteville, North Carolina, as the recipient of the National Employment Service Office Award.

The Fayetteville JobLink Career Center has not only excelled in finding jobs for veterans but has truly become an outstanding role model and member of the community.

The Fayetteville JobLink Career Center's involvement with the local Army and Air Force Transition Assistance Program has created an atmosphere of cooperation and goodwill providing an invaluable resource

to veterans in preparing them to enter into the civilian workforce.

The Fayetteville JobLink Career Center has reached an employment milestone by achieving an overall 104.3 percent of placement goal to include 101.3 percent for veterans and 99.3 percent for disabled veterans.

Their community involvement goes from being instrumental in assisting the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6018 to spearheading a homeless veterans stand down to promoting an "Employ a Vet Week" program.

Their support in the local civic leadership has resulted in acquiring the first state veterans nursing home, assisting the "Help Disabled War Veterans" program, and in helping to coordinate Fayetteville's First Veterans Day Parade.

This dedication clearly demonstrates that the Fayetteville JobLink Career Center has excelled in its service to veterans.

Here to accept the award is the Manager of the Fayetteville JobLink Career Center, Glenn C. McQueen.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Citation reads, "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, National Employment Service Award, presented to Fayetteville JobLink Career Center, Fayetteville, North Carolina, in recognition and appreciation for meritorious professional employment service rendered to veterans."

This has been signed by the Commander-in-Chief and the Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - MR. GLENN McQUEEN

MR. McQUEEN: Good morning. First let me begin by giving some thanks to the committee in Washington, Mr. Magill, in the way they put this coordination together in getting me here, as well as the comrade that picked me up at the airport and ensured that we got here.

To my fellow veterans and to the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America, on behalf of the Fayetteville JobLink Career Center and all the veteran representatives and the entire staff at the JobLink Center, I would like to say thank you for this honor.

It is indeed both a pleasure and an honor to receive this award that shows both the courage and appreciation for a job well done. At a time when veterans benefits are eroding and continuing cuts in veterans services are taking place, it is good to know an organization of this magnitude is fighting for veterans rights.

The staff at Fayetteville is very unique individuals who take pride in taking care of its own. We have continued to do that despite all of the obstacles to ensure that all veterans will receive the best service and assistance that they require and so definitely deserve. A special thanks to the Commander of Post 9103, Spring Lake, North Carolina, for their continuous support.

Again, on behalf of the Fayetteville JobLink Center, the Employment

Security Commission and the great State of North Carolina, I would like to say thank you, thank you, thank you. I wish you a very successful convention.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Once again, we thank you so much for your service to our veterans. This is an honorarium for \$1,000 and our VFW First 100 Years of Service book.

MR. McQUEEN: Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF OUTSTANDING VA HEALTH-CARE PROVIDER OF THE YEAR AWARD TO MRS. VICKI LAWRENCE

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The National Hospital Committee of the Veterans of Foreign Wars has established an award recognizing an outstanding VA Health-Care Provider of the Year. This award is presented to a VA employee who was nominated by a VFW Post for taking those extra steps in providing exemplary service to veterans and their families.

This year's recipient is Mrs. Vicki Lawrence, a registered nurse at the White River Junction VA Medical Center.

Mrs. Lawrence has been a provider of nursing care to veterans of Vermont and New Hampshire for over 25 years. Her patients consider her a sincere and caring person. Her devotion and compassion are trademarks which place her well above other nurses in her field.

Vicki's contributions to veterans extend well beyond the walls of the medical center. She has worked in the free Stoma Clinic sponsored by the United Ostomy Association, providing information and guidance to veterans in the community. She is a founding member of "Net-Vet", a VA-wide organization of therapists working to provide continuity of care throughout the VA system.

Vicki's other areas of interest include women's health care. She is the primary nursing presence in the Women Veterans Clinic and has been instrumental in organizing women veterans health fairs. The substance of her program presentations, coupled with her attention to detail, contributed to the success of the VA women veterans program.

It is with great pride that I present this year's Outstanding VA Health-Care Provider of the Year Award to Mrs. Vicki Lawrence from the White River Junction VA Medical Center in Vermont.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Citation reads, "Outstanding VA Health-Care Provider Award, 1998-1999, presented to Vicki Lawrence, in special recognition of your individual achievements in support of the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as the outstanding VA Health-Care Provider of the Year."

This has been signed by the Commander-in-Chief and the Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - MRS. VICKI LAWRENCE

MRS. LAWRENCE: Thank you very much for this award. I am honored and humbled by the selection of this prestigious award and I am very proud to accept this award. I would like to thank VFW Post 10038 from Vermont for my nomination, and I would like to thank my family, my son, daughter and husband for joining me here today.

Congratulations, VFW, on your 100th Anniversary celebration at this convention and your National Headquarters here in Kansas City. I applaud this organization and the service that it provides to the veterans. We witness this on a daily basis at our VA in White River Junction as we see the many volunteers who provide time and energy and the programs to the veterans in the hospital, and provide all the services that you do to support the VA health-care system. It is an honor for me to be able to serve the veterans as I have for the last 25 years in the State of Vermont. I feel very dedicated and devoted to that facility.

In summary, I would like to share with you one thing. One patient I was taking care of this summer made a statement to me that expressed the essence of the importance of the VA health-care system to health care for veterans. This veteran had had emergency surgery at a local private hospital and then was transferred to our VA hospital where when he was there, he said the other hospital may have saved my life, but it was here where my healing took place.

I think this shows that VA health-care system, the VA hospital system, where veterans take care of each other, where they help each other, where there is a sense of community within the hospital, where we take care of and heal the veterans. Again, I thank the VFW for the recognition of me, and on a larger scale, the recognition of health-care providers as part of the VA health-care team. Thank you.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We have an honorarium in the amount of \$1,000, and the VFW 100th Anniversary book.

MRS. VICKI LAWRENCE: Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY HEALTH-CARE PROVIDER OF THE YEAR AWARD TO MR. JAMES TZIVANIS

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: This year we are honored to present the VFW Outstanding Community Health-Care Provider of the Year Award to Mr. James Tzivanis of Trumansburg, New York.

Mr. Tzivanis is a registered physician assistant with the Ovid, Primary Care Clinic, which is part of the Schuyler Medical Center in Montour, New York. Jim started his career in medicine as a Navy Corpsman assigned to the Marine Corps. He re-enlisted in the Army and became a part of the Army Medical Corps, eventually rising to the rank of Chief

Warrant Officer. He was recalled to active duty during Desert Storm to help prepare troops for duty in the Gulf.

His patients and fellow workers at the clinic attribute his great success working with veterans to his military background. They describe his attitude towards his patients as "caring and sincere."

He is a true healer who will never stop helping until the sick and distressed receive the care and compassion they deserve. Mr. Tzivanis has gone beyond his normal responsibilities to provide comfort to those who seek his care.

I am honored to present this year's VFW Outstanding Community Health Care Provider of the Year Award to Mr. James Tzivanis of Trumansburg, New York.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Citation reads, "Outstanding Community Health-Care Provider Award, 1998-1999, presented to James Tzivanis, in special recognition of your individual achievements in support of the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as the Outstanding Community Health-Care Provider of the Year."

This has been signed by the Commander-in-Chief and the Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - MR. JAMES TZIVANIS

MR. TZIVANIS: Thank you, veterans, for this prestigious award. I would, first, like to thank my patients, and especially the men and women of Post 6200 in New York, and my family, and especially my wife, Esther, who managed to keep this nomination a secret for almost a year.

Our community in Ovid, New York, has an unusually large number of veterans. We had a base close a few years ago, and it is a source of many people who chose to retire and stay in the community. These people have been wonderful to me over the years, and to be nominated for such a prestigious award surprised me and I am speechless. Thank you very much, and God bless each of you.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: On behalf of the VFW, you will receive an honorarium of \$1,000 and also our book, First Century of Service.

MR. TZIVANIS: Thank you.

OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD TO MR. ELIJAH JETHRO

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: This is the sixth year the VFW has presented an award recognizing an individual for their exemplary service as a health-care provider.

This year's recipient is Mr. Elijah Jethro of Captain Horace G. Burke VFW Post 3480 in East St. Louis, Illinois. Mr. Jethro serves as Assistant Hospital and VAVS Director for the Department of Illinois. He works

closely with his Post and leads a detachment of volunteers weekly to the John Cochran VA Medical Center to distribute comfort items to patients and conduct recreational activities.

His desire to help others reaches over into the community where he provides activities for senior citizens in St. Clair County. In this program, he helps to coordinate home-delivered meals, transportation, adult day care, and home repairs for hundreds of senior citizens throughout the county.

You can call on Elijah for any type of assistance knowing he will deliver. He is known throughout Illinois as the man who can get the job done. He is a true friend to all veterans and their families.

I am proud to present this year's VFW Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award to Mr. Elijah Jethro of East St. Louis, Illinois.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The citation reads, "Outstanding Volunteer Award, 1998-1999, presented to Elijah Jethro, in special recognition of your individual achievements in support of the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as the Outstanding Volunteer of the Year.

This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief Pouliot and John J. Senk, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - MR. ELIJAH JETHRO

MR. JETHRO: Good morning. This is a surprise to me. I don't know who submitted my name, and I didn't know anything about this until the latter part of May. But I am glad that you did. I appreciate you thinking about me, and I am thankful for all the members of the Department of Illinois for the trust you have put in me. I also thank my wife for putting up with it.

I would like to say one thing. Volunteer and help veterans. Let's all do that and be proud of what we are doing. I have been doing this close to 21 years now. That was before I even got blind. I enjoy helping. So all I can say is if we are volunteers, and we are in there trying to help these patients, let's do it with a smile on our face and enjoy what we are doing. I want to thank the Department of Illinois for the opportunity to receive this award.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrade Jethro, on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I present you an honorarium of \$1,000 and also present you with our VFW First Century of Service book. Thank you for what you do for our veterans.

MR. ELIJAH JETHRO: Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW J. EDGAR HOOVER AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO CORPORAL GREGORY A. TRAVLAND

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I am pleased to

present the VFW J. Edgar Hoover Award for Outstanding Service in the field of Law Enforcement to an outstanding police officer from the City of Odessa, Texas.

Corporal Gregory Travland has earned the respect of his peers and the citizens of Odessa, through his continuous display of courage and dedicated service.

Since 1998, Officer Travland has worked as a field supervisor for the West Texas Narcotics Enforcement Task Force. Since then, he has assisted in over 42 arrests, has seized over \$660,000 in narcotics, and recovered over \$11,000 in drug money within a three-month period.

He has received 32 letters of commendation from local schools, civic groups and local law enforcement agencies, a life-saving award and several Certificates of Appreciation.

Corporal Travland's deeds, dedication and experience as a police officer exemplify the deeds and sacrifices of those of our nation's finest who serve our communities.

Please give a warm VFW welcome to our 1999 VFW J. Edgar Hoover Award recipient, Corporal Gregory Travland, of the City of Odessa Police Department.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Citation reads, "J. Edgar Hoover Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to Corporal Greg Travland, Odessa, Texas Police Department, in appreciation of his outstanding service, professionalism, bravery and knowledge in the field of law enforcement, and in special recognition of his continued assistance to several outside agencies committed to bettering the communities of West Texas.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 19th day of August, 1999. Approved by the Council of Administration."

This has been signed by Thomas A. Pouliot, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - MR. GREGORY TRAVLAND

MR. GREGORY TRAVLAND: First, I would like to say thanks to the VFW for having me here. I would also like to give a special thank you to the Odessa, Texas VFW, Commander Robbie Walker and his family, and all his troops in the VFW for standing behind this police department and all the officers there.

I am going to accept the award today, but first I would like to ask my Chief, who is James Jenkins, to come up here with me. He has been a great part in this award and I believe he should be honored along with me. I have worked for the Odessa Police Department for almost 20 years. In a few years I am getting ready to retire and seek a different career.

Since Chief Jenkins came to the Odessa Police Department in 1991, our department has taken a great turnaround, all for the best. With

his leadership abilities that he has given to all the leaders in our Department, which is taken down to each investigator, and it has made the Department a fair place to work, just a better place to be.

I accept the award on behalf of Chief Jenkins, on behalf of all the Odessa Police Department personnel and in behalf of all the police officers in this nation. Any number of officers could be up here receiving this award. It is something that through my life I will always remember.

At the Odessa Police Department, each of us strive to have a commitment to excellence. Each of us strive to make sure our operations are fundamentally and tactically sound and to provide the best service to our citizens. We are a community police department. We support our community and our community supports us.

We have to have the city standing behind us to make our job very successful. I ask each of you today to go back to your hometown, get involved with your police department, because they do need you. I again thank the VFW for bringing us here. This is something that I will never forget. Thank you very much.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: On behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, we have an honorarium of \$1,000 and also our VFW book, Our First Century of Service. Thank you for doing what you do to keep America safe.

MR. GREGORY TRAVLAND: Thank you very much.

PRESENTATION OF VFW EMERGENCY SERVICES AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO LIEUTENANT KEITH E. ANDERSON

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Annually, the VFW presents its Emergency Services Award to an individual for outstanding contributions to the community in the field of Emergency Services.

We are pleased to present this year's award to Lieutenant Keith Anderson, who rescued a fellow fire fighter during a house fire, disregarding his own safety for the welfare of another.

As commanding officer of Engine Company No. 5, he went beyond the call of duty and selflessly put his own life in harm's way to help a comrade that was trapped in a basement during a house fire.

During the course of the rescue, Lieutenant Anderson's warning bell on his air-pack sounded with a loud bell, signaling he was running low on air. Disregarding the alarm, Lieutenant Anderson continued to stay with his comrade. Not long after his alarm went off, his air supply depleted to nothing and he was forced to take his mask off to prevent suffocation, at the same time enduring the burning flames and thick smoke of the blaze.

Anderson stayed with his comrade until additional rescuers were available to give assistance. Lieutenant Anderson made sure his fellow fire fighter was out first, only then, did he get out himself.

Lieutenant Keith Anderson's dedication and selfless actions as a fire

fighter exemplify the deeds and sacrifices of those of the Emergency Services who serve our communities across this great nation.

Please welcome Lieutenant Keith Anderson, the 1999 recipient of the VFW Emergency Services Award.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Citation reads, "Emergency Services Award, Gold Medal and Citation presented to Lieutenant Keith E. Anderson, Nashua Fire Rescue, in special recognition of his valiant efforts and unselfish determination in risking his own life to rescue a fellow fire fighter trapped in a house fire. Lieutenant Anderson's actions, dedication and experience as a fire fighter exemplifies the deeds and sacrifices of all those in Emergency Services and who serve our communities across the nation.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 19th day of August, 1999. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has also been signed by Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot and Adjutant General John J. Senk, Jr.

RESPONSE - LIEUTENANT KEITH ANDERSON

LIEUTENANT ANDERSON: I would like to say I am very humble about this whole thing that transpired these past few months. I am very grateful to the VFW for this award and to the fire rescue team, my family and my two brothers made the trip to see me today.

To the VFW Post of Nashua, I say thank you. For all that I have done, which is very humbling, I think you folks are the heroes of the country and you made it possible for us to be here today. For that, I thank you. Again, to the Nashua Post, I thank you. To my family and to the City of Nashua, thank you very much.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: On behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, let me present you with this honorarium of \$1,000 and also our VFW First Century of Service book. Thank you. Give my love to my brothers back home.

LIEUTENANT ANDERSON: I will. Thank you very much.

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: At this time I call upon John Senk, Adjutant General, for an introduction.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: My comrades, at this time you see standing behind me our Sergeants-at-Arms. Let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation to a group of men that we see annually at our National Convention. I should have said comrades. She has always got a smile on her face. They come to this convention and they are up early in the morning and the first ones in the hall.

They arrange for the seating on special occasions, and they keep

order in the hall. They try to seat everybody and maintain order that is necessary during the meeting itself. These folks don't get a lot of money to do this. It is obviously a labor of love for them. I am sure that everyone recognizes they do an outstanding job for us. (Applause)

The Sergeant-at-Arms, from Post 6240, Kansas, Barry Hoffman. The Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms, from Post 4159, Michigan, Fred Von Hinken, Jr.; from Post 2083, Connecticut, Nicholas Polansky; from Post 1645, Massachusetts, Carl C. Aiello, from Post 2275, California, Keith McDonald; from Post 4847, Minnesota, Joe Schirmers; from Post 1911, Ohio, Dan Brown; from Post 9134, North Carolina, Gary Barringer; from Post 3979, Minnesota, Joey Collins Baxter.

These are the comrades that every time something goes wrong we start screaming at them. If something does go right, we forget to say thank you to them. I want to publicly say thank you to each and every one of them, the members of this team.

I am so proud of each one of them, and you handle yourselves as professionals. I am honored to have the opportunity to serve with each and every one of you. Thanks so much on behalf of all of us for what you do for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Let's give them a round of applause.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL
AND CITATION TO
NATIONAL ASSISTANT SERGEANT-AT-ARMS NICHOLAS POLANSKY

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Let me assure you of one thing, comrades, none of this would happen without the hard work of a very select, very elite group of people, the VFW Sergeant-at-Arms. They maintain the order and decorum that is so important at conventions and conferences. It seems like I am repeating myself and I am.

Sometimes it seems as if they work around the clock to make these conventions successful, but they never complain. They never show up late or go home early. They are steady, reliable and dependable. And today we are honoring one of them, Nicholas Polansky, for over 20 years of dedicated service.

The Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief will now present the VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation to Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms Nicholas Polansky upon his retirement.

The Citation reads, "Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to Nicholas Polansky, in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of over two decades of distinguished and unselfish service to the officers and delegates of the national conventions and conferences as an outstanding Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 19th

day of August, 1999."

This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - ASSISTANT SERGEANT-AT-ARMS POLANSKY

ASSISTANT SERGEANT-AT-ARMS NICHOLAS POLANSKY: I just want to say thank you to everyone, and it has been an honor and pleasure to be with this organization for the past 23 years. Thank you.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Comrades and sisters, on behalf of the Sergeant-at-Arms team, we just want to pay the appropriate honor to our comrade who is retiring after 23 years of faithful service. I would like to present arms in honor of him and present arms real quick. Please bear with us.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrade Senior Commander-in-Chief, I move that the proceedings of the Veterans of Foreign Wars 100th National Convention be submitted to the Speaker of the House of Representatives for printing as a House document in accordance with Public Law No. 620, 90th Congress, approved October 22, 1968, Title 214 of the United States Codes, Section 1332.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We have a motion on the floor. Do I have a second?

I recognize Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE WARREN TELGREN (Post 9644 - Colorado): I second that motion.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We have a motion on the floor. We have a second. Is there any discussion on the motion? Hearing no discussion on the motion, all those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed. The motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL HOME TRUSTEES

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the nominations for the National Home Trustees are as follows:

Second National Home District comprised of New York, New Jersey and Europe, Joseph Butler, Post No. 3117, Edison, New Jersey, and Ross R. Henry, Post 125, Plattsburg, New York.

For the Ninth Home District, comprised of Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska, Jack L. Armagost, Post 4836, Schuyler, Nebraska, and Orville L. Gullickson, Post 7438, Taylor, North Dakota.

For the Twelfth National Home District, comprised of Idaho, California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada and Hawaii, Verna Caywood, Ladies Auxiliary to VFW Post 1555, Chico, California, Dr. Carlos Vest, Post 969, Tacoma, Washington, and Mary Jane Sears, Ladies Auxiliary to VFW

INTRODUCTION OF PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I would like at this time to introduce the Past Commanders-in-Chief in attendance at the 100th Convention.

- 1976-77 - R. D. "Bulldog" Smith
- 1979-80 - Howard E. Vander Clute, Jr.
- 1983-84 - Clifford G. Olson, Jr.
- 1984-85 - Billy Ray Cameron
- 1991-92 - Robert E. Wallace
- 1993-94 - George R. Cramer
- 1994-95 - Allen F. "Gunner" Kent

We also have Past Commander-in-Chief Norman H. Staab in attendance. There are others that are in attendance but they are not here at this time.

PRESENTATION OF VFW GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION TO PAST DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH DAKOTA ADJUTANT- QUARTERMASTER WILLIAM J. RADIGAN, JR.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We proud ourselves on being a grassroots organization. That means that each and every member's efforts contribute to the organization's success. No one exemplifies this more than the next individual who will appear at this podium.

William J. Radigan, Sr., served for over forty years as the Adjutant/Quartermaster, VFW Department of South Dakota. You could always count on Bill Radigan. He ran a good Department, he ran a successful Department, and much of what we celebrate this year, our 100th Anniversary, we owe to Bill Radigan.

Comrades, sisters and friends, delegates to this convention, please give a warm VFW welcome to Bill Radigan.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Citation reads, "Gold Medal of Merit and this Citation awarded to William J. Radigan, Sr., in sincere appreciation for over four decades of exemplary service as the Adjutant/Quartermaster of the State of South Dakota. His outstanding contributions, exceptional leadership and unparalleled integrity have earned him the admiration and gratitude of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 19th day of August, 1999."

This has been signed by Thomas A. Pouliot Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - COMRADE WILLIAM RADIGAN

COMRADE RADIGAN: Thank you, John. Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Smart, and through you to Commander-in-Chief Pouliot and to my comrades in the audience, I knew nothing of this and I think you can understand I am a bit moved today.

I would at this time like to thank my dear deceased wife, Susie, and my eleven children who sacrificed a lot so I could do this work. I would like to recognize Pat O'Neill and the group that talked me into going to work for the VFW. My Post 3061 in Vermillion, South Dakota, and the Ladies Auxiliary have always been there for me for the whole 47 years.

Those dear comrades that I had pleasant times with when we formed the Big Ten Conference and had some good arguments and some good discussions, I love them all. Every time I see one it reminds me of how wonderful this organization has been.

I would also like, of course, to thank my comrades in the great Department of South Dakota, who 47 times elected me as their Quartermaster. Life is not long, life sometimes can be short. I have been blessed with quite a long life and for 47 years of the 100 this organization has been in existence I have been the Quartermaster/Adjutant of South Dakota. That is a great experience. I can't tell you how wonderful it has been.

There is a saying I would like to leave with you this morning, I especially want to thank all the National Officers that I have worked with, starting way back with a gentleman by the name of Captain Bob Handy. Bob was so good about training us who came on board.

So I say to all of you, it is not the price you pay to join this organization, it is the price you pay to become eligible. There is no better way to serve your community and your fellow veterans than in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

I am so moved I hardly know what to say, but I certainly thank every one of you, regardless of what your office or position might be. May God bless you all. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: If I may, just a personal privilege, I would like to thank you so much for 16 years that I have looked for your guidance and wisdom as the Quartermaster. I thank you for that. On behalf of our Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot, I present you our First Century of Service book.

VISIT OF NATIONAL HOME REPRESENTATIVES

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: For over 70 years, the VFW National Home at Eaton Rapids, Michigan, has been a

haven of comfort, safety and hope for hundreds of children and adults, as well. It is one of the most profound examples of veterans helping veterans, and VFW and VFW Ladies Auxiliary members fulfilling our commitment to honor the dead by helping the living.

From a small farm in the Michigan countryside, the home has grown to a large bustling community. Modern facilities contain the latest in education and recreation resources, while comfortable houses and caring staff provide the homes that the children need to grow and thrive in and reach their greatest potential.

We are honored today to have with us the President of the VFW National Home, John Burnett, who has brought with him two very special guests, the Interim Executive Director of the Home, Past Commander-in-Chief Howard Vander Clute, and the 1999 Buddy Poppy Child, Dominique Hite. Let's give them a real big VFW welcome.

NATIONAL HOME PRESIDENT JOHN BURNETT: Commander-in-Chief, National Officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Comrades and Delegates:

I just want to say a few words on the cooperation that we have gotten between the Kansas City office and the National Home this year. It made me as chairman feel tremendous with the support we have had from the Kansas City office, the chair officers, the Adjutant General, the Quartermaster General, who have attended our meetings and really helped us out with their expertise.

I want to thank each Post, District and Department that has donated money to the upkeep of the VFW National Home. Howard is going to give us a little synopsis on what has been accomplished the last few months. We are very, very proud of what Howard has done out there to get us financially stabilized and the repairs and maintenance that are being done on our houses and on the grounds of the VFW National Home. Again, I want to thank each and every one of you.

At this time I would like to have Past Commander-in-Chief Howard Vander Clute to explain what has been going on at the VFW National Home.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF VANDER CLUTE: National Officers, Delegates to this 100th Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I welcome the opportunity this morning to represent the VFW National Home children, and I want to deliver a very brief message that are your concerns. I have heard, as you have heard, and quite frankly, we know there are many of our members who are skeptics about the operation of the VFW National Home for children.

I must include myself during a certain period of time. All you need to do is to have an opportunity to spend time at this facility to find that you become emotionally involved in the interest of the children that we care for. I am concerned about rumors that develop constantly.

I would like to discuss them very briefly with you this morning. The one rumor that we hear all the time is half of our houses are empty. We

only have 40 or 50 kids there. I am telling you that we have 99 children and 24 single parents, with a clientele of 123. That is more than we have had in over 20 years at the VFW National Home for children.

The other one that I hear consistently is that we have more employees than we have children. That is not so. We have 68 full-time employees. I want you to remember that we have 629 acres, 71 buildings, our own water system, our own sewage system, and a mile and one-half of roads to care for.

So even if there were no children in the VFW National Home, to maintain the physical plant would require the services of at least fifteen maintenance and custodial personnel. That is without any children in the facility.

Here is another one that I hear in the field and you hear as well: "We accept any children. You can't tell me that these kids are children or family members or grandchildren are members of the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary." Yes, I can. I can tell you that without contradiction that every child that is being cared for in the VFW National Home today is either a child, grandchild or family member of a VFW or Auxiliary member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, because that is the first thing I did when I arrived on campus. I made sure that the records reflected that that fact is a fact.

Here is another one. "Single parents of the National Home were forced to apply for food stamps, embarrassment to them and to our organization." Yes, we could apply for food stamps but we don't. None of the single parents there utilize food stamps at the National Home.

We provide grocery money on a weekly basis to each single parent and each care worker in each one of the cottages of the VFW National Home. And write this down, it is \$1.75 per person per meal, which is more than adequate for the nourishment of the children at the home. This figure was arrived at after a study of the United States Department of Agriculture, what is nourishing for a child, and it even provides for extravagances.

Here is one we hear occasionally: "Our houses are a mess inside. Nobody on our staff checks to see if the housekeeping chores are being done and the children are being properly cared for." The houses are inspected weekly by child care workers and our counseling staff. We have a professional counseling staff at our VFW National Home.

It is true that many of the young single moms who come to our facility are not prepared to appropriately care for their homes and their children, and that is why they need the services of our counseling staff. The houses are inspected weekly and those that are not up to standards, those single parents are counseled on how to care for their homes and their children appropriately.

I want to tell you something else. There has been a change in policy. Remember, years ago the VFW National Home used to accept single parents with their children and we became their keepers from the time they arrived at the National Home with just small children through the

emancipation of those children, and even on into college we kept the single parents there.

This is not so anymore. We need to care for more children and for more single parents. They sign a contract for three years. During that three-year period, the single parents are counseled. If they don't have a high school diploma, they are encouraged to get a GED, and encouraged to take training so they have marketable skills that they can take out into the real world and be prepared to care for their own children. Three years from dependency to independency. What a unique program for this organization to have taken on, and it is successful.

What about the homes now? I have heard complaints over the years our cottages are not being used for child care. Let me tell you right now, every house but two are open and occupied by families. Those two are under major repair. One is Connecticut that will be ready to receive a family on September 15th.

The other one is the Pennsylvania home. You know, they have four, and they are in the process of doing major repairs in that. A family will move into that facility on October 15th. We will be filled to capacity, the first time in 25 years that the National Home has been filled to capacity.

I say this to you, my comrades, because this facility is deserving of your support, both emotionally and financially. Please help us exist, please help us to continue to serve veterans. Please help us to serve members of our organization, and the Ladies Auxiliary. Thank you very much. I want to tell you that I appreciated this opportunity to work as the Interim Director of the VFW National Home. It energizes me. Frankly, I was tired of doing that list that your wife provides for you when you are in retirement. It was a great opportunity for me, and I appreciate being asked.

Let me say this to you. In two weeks I will be gone. The National Home Board of Trustees in their wisdom has hired a new Executive Director. This young man, 42 years old, is presently on our staff. He has been there for almost three years. He has received already two promotions. This will be his third.

He has a Bachelor's Degree in Clinical Psychology and an undergraduate degree in Psychology, and 18 years of child care and family service experience, far beyond that which is required by the State of Michigan licensing agency. This is a young man who can give us the service and give us stability in the VFW National Home that we need so badly, and we can continue the legacy that was given to all of us by the foundation of our organization. We will be 75 years old beginning in the year 2000.

Let me introduce to you our new Executive Director, effective September 1, Mike Kessler.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KESSLER: Thank you, Howard. Good morning to all of you. I would like to say since we could not bring all of you to the VFW Home, we brought some of the VFW Home to you. I would like to have Tammy O'Dell, one of our house members, to stand. She has

given many years of service to the Home. That is Lionel, who lives in Tammy's home, and Dominique Hite.

Well, good morning and greetings from the 123 residents and also the staff of your great living memorial, the VFW National Home for Children. I want to tell you just a bit about who you are serving and give you a couple of scenarios. We have one mother who served in the Gulf War and her two children who came to the Home.

This woman discovered that she has many emotional problems during the years she was there and realized she was not able to care for her children. At your great Home, her two children are living there in one of the residential homes under the care of Tammy and other house parents. This mother comes and visits her children. It is her goal to become stable and then reunite with her children. The father is out of the picture in this case.

Another mother, a relative of a Veterans of Foreign Wars, she and her three children and her husband were to move into their new home, and on the first night they were at the home a burglar came in and killed the father, the husband, in front of the children, and stabbed the mother several times. The father died, the mother lived, and the mother and her three children are being served at this great Home.

There is a grandmother there now caring for her grandchildren at the Home. The mother of the children was killed in a car accident and the father is not involved in their lives. Each and every hour of each and every day, relatives of our heroic and fallen comrades are honored to care for the orphaned, the fatherless and the widowed.

I assure you that the relatives of veterans who reside at the houses are well cared for. At the risk of sounding politically incorrect and stereotypical, I want to tell you that we give a balanced approach to child rearing. We realize that youth need both a caring and often a tender nurturing from the mothers, such as Tammy, but they also need strict direction, teaching and discipline that stereotypically comes from fathers.

Because of your support, we are raising some model youth. The youth and the single parents at the home are learning to make the best of life no matter what has happened to them. They are working through their losses, they are not only becoming survivors, but good victors. They are learning to contribute in the larger community.

Three thousand seven hundred hours of service were provided by the new and single parents of the VFW Home. This morning, I prayed that God would bless each of you one hundredfold for your support to the orphaned, fatherless and widowed.

I congratulate you for the thousands of lives that you have changed because of the VFW National Home for Children, and as the Executive Director I pledge to you I will continue to serve your relatives there. Again, congratulations, and God bless you and happy anniversary.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF VANDER CLUTE: We have our National VFW Poppy Child from the VFW National Home, and I would like

to introduce him to you right now because I know he is a young child with a lot of personality and a lot of things to say to all of you. Let me introduce Dominique Hite.

REMARKS BY 1999 BUDDY POPPY CHILD

BUDDY POPPY CHILD HITE: Hi. My name is Dominique. I am eight years old. I live at the VFW National Home in the Florida House. My family is Lionel, Michael, Pollock, Dino, Margie, Curby and me. My hobbies are to ride my bike and play basketball. I play all sorts of games, like volleyball, hockey, all different types, with time permitting.

I go to school and I am in the third grade. While we were coming here in the airplane, they got up to the runway and they stopped because they had a leak in the hydraulics. I like living at the VFW National Home, because they take care of me when my mom can't. My favorite food is pizza. My favorite color is purple.

When I grow up, I want to be a train maker. Thank you for choosing me to be the Buddy Poppy child and caring about the Home so much.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF VANDER CLUTE: Dominique has a brother Lionel, and they sort of hit separate balls around the campus, so we thought it was important to bring Dominique's brother along, this guy right here.

NATIONAL HOME PRESIDENT BURNETT: Again, I want to thank you, each one of you, for your donations to the VFW National Home, and I would like to thank Howard Vander Clute personally for the job he has done up there in the last four months, just by bringing us up by the bootstraps to where we are now.

Every Home is open and we do have a waiting list to get in there at our VFW National Home. This is the 75th Anniversary of the VFW National Home and communication will be going out to let you know of the various programs that we will be having at the Home.

One last thing. They have got their bags and they collect pins. If anyone has a pin, give them both to Lionel and Dominique. Thank you very much.

Commander-in-Chief, I have a little gift from the National Home in appreciation for the support that you and your officers have given to the VFW National Home this year. Thank you very much, Tom.

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief Pouliot assumed the chair.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The National Home is, of course, important to all of us, and when it runs smoothly and runs well, that is good for us, and it is good for our widows and orphans in our organization. We are pleased that the Home is running very well again.

NATIONAL HOME PRESIDENT BURNETT: It is, indeed. Is the Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie present? Again, thank you very much.

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE LADIES AUXILIARY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the National President of our Ladies Auxiliary and her delegation to the podium, please.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, it gives me great pleasure this morning to bring to our convention the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary. Jane and I have had a wonderful year together. We began planning on it a couple of years ago.

We even worked together to make sure that our teams matched up so we would coordinate the VFW and Ladies Auxiliary in this, our 100th year. I think it has worked very well. I think that the VFW has had an outstanding year, but we only had that outstanding year because of and with the help of our wonderful Ladies Auxiliary.

I was just in the Ladies meeting and they looked brighter than you do this morning. I told them on behalf of the VFW that we thank them for their 86 years of service to veterans, to our communities, to our youth, and by helping us help our veterans.

They are a strong right arm and our best friend. I know this lady is my best friend, our National President, Jane Bingham.

REMARKS BY LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT BINGHAM: Commander-in-Chief Tom, Past National Commanders, National Officers and VFW Members:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak just once more as the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. The day after tomorrow, I am going back to the boondocks, and next year I will be in the boondocks of Milwaukee. You can count on it.

This has been a really great year for the Ladies Auxiliary. It will be the eleventh year in a row we raised more than \$3 million for cancer aid and research. Many of you are aware of what I am going to discuss next, because I have understood from our national office that they heard from as many VFW members as Auxiliary members when it became possible to check daily membership totals on the Auxiliary Website. Now, I know westerners are very, very computer literate. Even in the corners of Alaska, they have the proper wiring, and where I live in Vermont, we don't.

So maybe by Christmas time I will be able to get on your e-mail. Just in time for this convention, we have also added news releases to our Web site. This morning I want to thank you as members for all your help, all the help you give us in the joint programs.

You know, the Ladies Auxiliaries don't really have very much

money, and in many of our Posts, my own in particular, if the Ladies vote to make a donation or a gift, the Post automatically matches that gift up to a certain amount of money which makes it each year to cause us to work together.

We have had a long-standing prior agreement, that we pick the place, and they give the money. And for that I thank all of you and I know they do it in lots of places. It is particularly exciting to see the success of Operation Uplink. Uplink has not been a special project for me by definition.

But as I visited in all of your different states, Uplink was uppermost in my mind. When I visited in Germany and in Korea, even in Taiwan and in Guam, the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, we were able to hand out cards and you could see the expression on the young people's faces.

At the Naval Academy, and I will have to tell you this because I thought it was funny. At the Naval Academy, they sort of avoided us. They thought we were trying to sell them something. So as we gave them the card, we said, "This is a freebie from the VFW. You can telephone your mother, your girlfriend, somebody else's girlfriend," and then they got the message.

At our Council of Administration meeting last Saturday, the Ladies Auxiliary approved a special \$4,500 donation this year for Operation Uplink. This will be in addition to all the other money we have given.

I want to extend congratulations to all of you on your 100th National Convention and the 100th Anniversary celebration, which has been conducted all week. I would like to say to Joe Ridgley that I am just delighted this is coming out of his pocketbook and not mine. Thank you very much, all of you.

I do want to thank you, Tom, for everything that you have done to make this year so pleasant and this convention so successful. It has been an honor to serve with you. May I take a moment of special privilege? Where are the Vermonters? (Applause) Just checking. If they had not been here, I would have cried all day long. It is pretty dark over there. Tom, as a token of my appreciation, I would like to present you with this flag set.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: It says National Convention, Organized 1899, National Convention Flag, Ladies Auxiliary, and, of course, our American Flag.

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT BINGHAM: I hope you enjoy that. I would like to thank you. I really appreciate your sharing the State Conductress of Montana with us this past year. It has been a pleasure to have you and Shirley as friends. Thank you very much. That is something from me to you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Jane, I want to thank you for all the fun that we have had together. I thank you for that flag set. It is the perfect size for my office. Of course, I will send you a picture of myself at my desk with the flags flowing and flying behind me. Thank you very much

for that and also for this personal gift.

But I mostly thank you for your friendship. We are bonded together now as Commander and President, but we have a bond beyond that, a special bond of friendship. We thank you very much for all the work that you have done this year to make this 100th year the best year we have ever had. Thank you.

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT BINGHAM: I almost forgot you. This is Tom's wife, Shirley. Shirley is conductress of the Department of Montana.

MRS. SHIRLEY POULIOT: Tom is going to drive me in Montana now. I just want to thank you gentlemen for taking such good care of Tom while he traveled. You brought him home safely to me. Now I am going to find out what it is like to be married.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: I am going to object to that. I thought you had some idea what it was like to be married.

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT BINGHAM: This is our Chief of Staff, Stephanie Kavanaugh, from the Department of Pennsylvania. Thank you all very, very much for everything that you do.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Sergeant-at-Arms, you will escort our Ladies Auxiliary officers from our meeting hall.

PRESENTATION TO THE NATIONAL HOME

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: For purposes of a special presentation, I would call to the podium Howard Vander Clute.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF VANDER CLUTE: Comrades, one of the larger Posts in my Department, or I guess it is the largest Post, Post 2290, and its Ladies Auxiliary in Manfield, New Jersey, has asked to make a presentation to the VFW National Home. For that purpose, I would like to introduce Andy Hinkle.

COMRADE ANDY HINKLE (Post 2290 - New Jersey): Thank you, Howard. We are very appreciative of all you do and have done for our Department and the National Organization. You always give 110 percent and your tenure at the National Home was no exception. On behalf of Thomas J. Kavanaugh Post 2290 and its Ladies Auxiliary of Manfield, New Jersey, I am pleased to present this check for \$1,500 to you for the National Home.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much for that very generous donation. I hope that all of our Posts and individuals will donate to the National Home so that they can have an outstanding program and so they can provide for the children all the necessities.

Our young Buddy Poppy boy and his brother are walking around the room, so be ready with your pins.

PRESENTATION OF WHEELCHAIR ON BEHALF OF INVACARE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, in appreciation to the men and women of the Veterans of Foreign Wars who served during our nation's conflicts, Invacare Corporation, the world's leading manufacturer and distributor of home medical equipment products, has donated 100 wheelchairs to the 100th VFW National Convention.

The wheelchairs have been available for anyone needing assistance during this convention. After the convention, the wheelchairs will be given to VISN No. 15, to be used during next year's 2000 Golden Age Games in Topeka, Kansas.

Each wheelchair is valued at \$450, making the total donation valued at \$45,000. To mark this special occasion, the VFW would like to present a wheelchair to the Department of Veterans Affairs on behalf of Invacare Corporation.

Accepting on behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs is Ms. Crosetti. Please give a warm VFW welcome to Ms. Crosetti.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: There is a plaque on the side of this wheelchair and it reads, "Presented to VA Heartland Network VISN No. 15 by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in grateful appreciation for the support of our 100th Anniversary Convention. This wheelchair symbolizes a donation of 100 wheelchairs provided through grant from Invacare, Inc., August 19, 1999, Kansas City, Missouri."

MS. CROSETTI: Thank you. I would like to thank all of you for allowing us to participate in the celebration. We organized and managed the health-care downstairs, staffed it. We have seen a lot of you the last few days. Secondly, thank you for the wheelchairs. We are looking forward to seeing many of you in Topeka next year at the Heartland Golden Age Games. We will take a good of care of you there as we have here.

Most importantly, I want to thank you for the honor of being allowed to serve you in No. 15. We know that is what it is all about. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, many of you know our National Officers, our Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Smart and our Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak, and most of you know, of course, our next Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect, Jim Goldsmith. But the other National Officers quickly do their assigned tasks and responsibilities without much fanfare.

At this time I would like to introduce each of our national officers and have them stand and hold your applause until I introduce them all. The first is our National Chaplain, Father Neville; our Inspector General, Norbert Enos; our Chief of Staff, Randy Russell; our Surgeon General, Kenneth Snow; and our Judge Advocate General, Earl Lord. Let's hear it for

these, our officers, who have done such a wonderful job for us this year. (Applause)

Comrades, at this time I am not sure, it looks like we are being inundated. This looks like a wonderful group here. This is our National Staff.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, I want to thank you for the time on the agenda this morning to introduce to the comrades at this convention those members of the National Staff in the Kansas City and our Washington office that have been selected to work at the convention and do so most every year.

These are representatives from all of our employees. I wanted to bring them up here today and say a special thank you for all they have done to make this, our 100th convention, a very, very special one. They have put a lot of hard work and a lot of long hours into making this convention successful with all the different venues we had and all of the things that we have done at this convention.

Sometimes we get too busy to say thank you, and I know that Joe is going to have an opportunity here in a minute, to say a personal thank you for each and every one of you for making this convention so great. We get the accolades, people stop Joe and I and say what a great convention, and things are going great. These are the people that make it happen.

I want to tell you something, we have been meeting for, I guess, almost two years, right, Joe, planning for this, our 100th convention. Joe Ridgley was the Chairman of the 100th Anniversary. What a taskmaster. He has worked us hard. For the last six or seven months, we have met every week on a weekly basis, and he wanted a report on where we were on each and every event.

Joe has done a fantastic job in making sure that everyone else did their job. Some people have affectionately called us the "frick and frack" team. So, please welcome to the podium for your accolades, frick.

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL RIDGLEY: It is hard to get up here this morning because John Senk and I have worked very closely together the last couple of years, and especially this last six months. I wanted to make sure that every decision and every contract that we signed together so we could go down together.

But, John, thank you. I am sure that the members of your staff have worked so hard on this and will be glad to get me out of their lives. They have cooperated and the staff has worked very close together. You have seen them out here, and I want to point out a few people, but everybody up here and the others that are not even up here that worked so very, very hard on this convention. I certainly didn't do it, John certainly didn't do it all.

It is the people you see up here. The Washington staff has been here and working hard. They have been at all the events with their staff shirts. They have been working ever since they arrived and they have worked extremely hard. The military folks that you see were all coordinated by Captain Dan Bell, who was the military person who coordinated all the

military activities during the entire convention.

I didn't have a chance to tell you earlier, I don't believe, that Captain Bell, with the U.S. Marine Corps, he took on this task of coordinating the military and he did an admirable job. He knew all along today, the day after our last event, he was going to be retiring from the U.S. Marine Corps after 22 years. So he did a great job.

I would like to thank you, Benny and Vanessa. They did a great job in coordinating everything. I would like to call off everybody's name, but if I mention one name, I need to mention them all and I can't. The one purpose for the membership of this organization and the Ladies Auxiliary was for you to enjoy the 100th Anniversary and celebrations that we put together for you. Every single one of you, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I appreciate you and I appreciate everything that you have done. Thank you all.

There is another group of people that I want to thank, and I think the National Convention, obviously comes under the responsibility of the Adjutant General. This has been a joint effort from two Departments, which are very close, the Department of Missouri and the Department of Kansas, who have worked so hard to make everything happen and happen right.

I am going to point out one individual, even though there are many who should be pointed out. But Jim Hughes, the one responsible for transportation, I don't know if he is in this hall right now, but Jim has done an admirable job making sure of the VIP transportation for all of the activities for our distinguished guests. Thank you very much, Jim.

Both Departments, my Department of Missouri and also the Department of Kansas, thank you all, comrades, very much. Thank you, Jim, for being the Convention Chairman. This has been a great, great convention. Everything that happens, that went on, it can't get any better than this. Thank you very much.

Here is Jim. He wants to say something.

COMRADE JAMES MUELLER (Department of Missouri): To Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot, National Officers, Delegates and Members, Past Commanders-in-Chief and Guests, before we bring this, the VFW 100th Centennial Convention to a close, I would personally like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to some very deserving people.

I would like to express my thanks to Joe Ridgley, our Convention Chairman, to make it a truly memorable convention and one we should all be proud to attend. To Benny Bachand, our Convention Manager, to Vanessa King, Meeting Manager, and again our national staff in Kansas City and the Washington office that worked so hard to make this a great convention, all I can say is thank you.

This was a working convention for them. They have done an outstanding job, a terrific job. I would like to thank them for their cooperation and support, and I think they deserve a big hand. (Applause)

I would like to also express my thanks to the many sponsors, because they have made this possible. I would like to thank my committee

personally. This is a bi-state committee like Joe said, of Kansas and Missouri members. I would like to take a moment to mention their names.

From Kansas, we had Roger Sellars, who was Vice-Chairman and head of the registration. Reverend Charles Carpenter, who did such an excellent job on the Memorial Service. Steve Phelps, meeting and hall signs, they put a lot of time in this. Also McKinley Smith, the members for Missouri, Paul Connors, Secretary-Treasurer. Ken Cole served as distinguished guests chairman, Dale Potter was MOC liaison.

Pat McCullough was Chairman of the Patriotic Rally. Jack Adams, I think has done a terrific job as Medical Chairman. We had one of the biggest Health Fairs the convention has ever seen. To Jimmy Hughes, the transportation chairman, I can't thank you enough for all you have done. You have done a tremendous job.

There are two things before I leave. I would like to express thanks to my counterpart, Chris Bock, of the Ladies Auxiliary and to her ladies. We tried to accomplish two things at this convention to make you all feel welcome and to make this a memorable convention for you, one that you will never forget. I hope we have accomplished this.

I would like to thank Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot for allowing me to serve as your Convention Chairman. May God bless all of you and this great organization, and please have a safe trip home.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Well, thank you, Jim. Everyone knows what it is to be a point man and Jim took on the task of being Chairman for this National Convention and he worked very hard. So I think we all ought to show a special appreciation to our Chairman Jim Mueller. (Applause)

One more word about the staff. If everything has gone well, and you have had a wonderful convention, if you see a staff person say "thank you". If it hasn't gone well, see "frick" or "frack".

NOMINATION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, at this time we will move into nominations. Those persons who are going to make nominations, please come up on the dais at this time. We will begin with nominations for the Commander-in-Chief. What? Do you want me to run again? Well, maybe not. (Laughter) Is Past Commander-in-Chief Cliff Olson in the room?

At this time we will accept nominations for Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 1999-2000. I will call at this time on Past Commander-in-Chief Cliff Olson.

NOMINATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OLSON: Thank you, comrades. I would have been here a while ago but I couldn't get up the stairs.

Commander-in-Chief, Comrades and Delegates to the 100th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, there have been two other occasions when I have had the distinct pleasure and profound honor to place in nomination for an elected position the name of the comrade I am about to nominate.

This comrade, a retired fire fighter, who has given so much to his home community and his fellow man, this veteran who paid the price of eligibility while serving in Vietnam with the 176th Division Assault Helicopter Company. His dedication and ability to serve the Veterans of Foreign Wars has certainly been proven during these past two years as he has served as your Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief and as the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

These past two years, he has shown his leadership ability, along with his keen spirit, he has shown his knowledge of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, his desire to aid and assist all veterans along with their families. He has proven his knowledge and dedication and his ability, not only in the past two years but in the many years and in the many ways since he became the youngest veteran to be elected to the office of State Commander of the Department of New Hampshire of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

He ended that year by being named an All-American Department Commander. He has proven his durability to this organization as he has held the office of State Adjutant or State/Adjutant Quartermaster for approximately 18 years. My comrades, he has traveled extensively throughout the organization and throughout the world on behalf of veterans this past year.

I should add in the past two years he has dispensed and acquired knowledge and experience that will aid and assist him in our organization as we enter the new millennium. He certainly welcomes the opportunity to prove that he is a team player, that he is not afraid of the change or challenge to challenge those issues that he feels are not in the best interests of the veteran or the Veterans of Foreign Wars as we move forward.

As we enter a new century of service, my comrades, we shall proceed with a proven candidate, a man that has the complete support of his Post, his state, his conference and I am sure the same support from the entire Veterans of Foreign Wars. I also add with the complete support of his lovely wife, Mary, and his entire family.

It is with great and sincere pride that I present to you that comrade of which I speak, the man who has shown his keen compassion for all, the comrade that has proven his qualifications and his desire to fulfill the duties of a higher office.

Again, I state it is my privilege and distinct honor and without reservation that I place in nomination for the high office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States the name of a great and caring friend, a great and caring comrade, a man from the Department of New Hampshire, that great granite state, the name of John W. Smart.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: For purposes of a second, I call upon John Packard.

COMRADE JOHN PACKARD (Post 8546 - New Hampshire): My comrades and delegates to the 100th Anniversary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, 53 years as a member of the Department of New Hampshire and in my day I have never found or seen a candidate as qualified to be the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars than John Smart.

We have here a young, relatively young, and we have a seasoned comrade that has been nominated through the District and the Department of New Hampshire, and I will tell you now we have a mature, well-knowing candidate. He will be the best Commander-in-Chief.

I have heard that through all the years, but he will be the best Commander-in-Chief that this country has seen. It is my honor and privilege to second the nomination of John Smart for Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: For purposes of a second, I recognize Robert Madigan.

COMRADE ROBERT MADIGAN (Post 483 - New Hampshire): Commander-in-Chief, National Officers and Comrades:

It is indeed an honor for me to stand here today to second the nomination of John W. Smart for Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Are there any other nominations for the office of Commander-in-Chief? Hearing none, the nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

NOMINATION OF SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We will now have the nominations for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the year 1999-2000. Making a nomination will be R. D. "Bulldog" Smith.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMITH: Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Fellow Comrades to the 100th Anniversary Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States:

Approximately a year ago I had the opportunity to stand before the delegation of this great organization to place in nomination the name of our candidate for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief from the great Southern Conference. At that time I told you that you would not only be electing a Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief but you would be electing a person that was responsible, a person that loves this organization and a person that was a go-getter, and when he had completed his year that you would be extremely, extremely proud to have had the opportunity to have him serve as your Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

John Gwizdak was born July 7, 1940, in Revloc, Pennsylvania, and raised in Hellertown, and is a graduate of Hellertown High School. He earned his Associate of Arts Degree in Human Resources in Administration from the University of the State of New York.

John retired from the United States Army in June, 1978, after completing over 20 years service as a non-commissioned and commissioned officer in the infantry. He earned his eligibility in the Veterans of Foreign Wars through the occupation of Germany and Berlin, and a tour of Vietnam where he served with the 199th Light Infantry Brigade as an infantry heavy weapons platoon leader and company commander.

His military awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, four awards of the Bronze Star Medal, including one for valor, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Purple Heart, the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Pom device, three Army Commendation Medals, Army Occupation Medal Berlin, Vietnam Campaign and Service Medals, three Good Conduct Medals, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, Expert Medals for both Rifle and Pistol.

John joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars in 1976 and is a Life Member of Post 5080, Lake City, Georgia. He is also a Life Member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, and the Disabled American Veterans. His membership also includes the MOC, the American Legion, the American Veterans Association, and the Combat Infantrymen's Association.

John has worked in real estate as a broker and builder since retiring from the Army. He is the owner and President of John F. Gwizdak, Inc., and owner/broker for Builders Realty. He served from 1992 to 1998 as Quartermaster/Adjutant General for the State of Georgia.

Since joining the Veterans of Foreign Wars, John has constantly applied the extensive leadership gained in the military to the betterment of this organization. He has set the example at the Post to National level to clearly define representation to our veterans. John has served with distinction.

He has achieved All-American Commander in 1988 and 1989. During this tenure, he was instrumental by his testimony before Sonny Montgomery's Committee on Veterans Medical Care to preclude the closing of services at the Dublin, Georgia Medical Center. He has also been the veterans advocate before the Georgia State Legislature on many occasions while serving in his capacity as Quartermaster/Adjutant for the State of Georgia.

At the National level, John served on the National Council of Administration in 1990-92, the Appeals Committee, and Chairman of the Americanism and Legislative Committees, and Vice-Chairman of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee. He was three years on the National By-Laws Review Committee.

John is married to Betty S. Burns. She is a Past Department President of the Ladies Auxiliary and served as an aide-de-camp member on the National Council of Administration to the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. John and Betty are the parents of five children. John, our thoughts and prayers are with you and Betty during the recent tragic loss of your daughter, Deborah, and your mother, Mary Lee Smith.

During this past year, while serving as our Junior Vice Commander-

in-Chief, John has displayed the professionalism that he possesses not only meeting with the world leaders as he traveled abroad, but discussed veterans problems with members of Congress, cabinet officials of the administration, but more importantly reaching out to the troops on the grassroots level, keeping us well informed of the challenges that lie ahead for veterans of this great country.

John is admired by all he has come in contact with and has earned the respect that enables him to move on to the next chair level of this great organization. My comrades, it is a distinct pleasure for me to place in nomination the name of your friend and mine, John Gwizdak, for the high office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, I thank "Bulldog" for making mention of the fact that we need to remember John and his wife, Betty, in our prayers during this difficult time for them.

For purposes of a second, the chair recognizes Richard Branson.

COMRADE RICHARD BRANSON (Post 5080 - Georgia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Delegates to this 100th National Convention:

This is a great day in America and certainly a great day for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I am privileged to be afforded the opportunity to assist in the presentation of John Gwizdak for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He has been a true friend over these last years and I know him well.

He is a dynamic individual with all the necessary requisite qualifications, leadership, managerial and personal skills to launch this organization into the 21st Century. Throughout this year as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, he has demonstrated these talents to our comrades and sisters.

He has traveled this nation and world and is always placing us first. He has been an ambassador and diplomat, and ensures that our voice is heard. His creed is honor with integrity. He never waivers from this creed, even when the decision process gets tough. He refers to this membership body as heroes.

You may be assured that he will always represent you with the highest esteem. He is proud and humble of his close association with all comrades. He is eager to tell anyone who will listen, "I am a member of the VFW." John has commented to me many times, "I believe that the majority of the comrades get up every day to do the right thing."

He believes that most of the problems and situations in the VFW are totally due to a lack of communication and training. His positive leadership style is contagious. He will proactively approach problems with quick resolutions. Those of us that have known John as well as I do could go on and on.

You will witness firsthand his capabilities to do a superb job as the Senior Vice Commander and ultimately lead this organization. It is with distinct honor and it is with great pride that I am afforded the opportunity

to second the nomination of John Gwizdak for the position of our next Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Are there any other nominations for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Hearing none, the nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

We will now have the nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief for 1999-2000. The first person to nominate will be Past Commander-in-Chief George Cramer.

NOMINATION OF JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. Comrade Commander-in-Chief Pouliot, National Officers, Delegates to the 100th National Convention:

I rise to place in nomination a comrade, a member and a gentleman that I have had the opportunity to serve with at the Post, District and Department levels as Commander. James Goldsmith earned his eligibility to the Veterans of Foreign Wars by serving in the United States Army as an Engineer in Vietnam from April, 1966, to August, 1967.

He has earned many military decorations which include the Vietnam Service and the Vietnam Campaign Medal. Jim was recruited by a fellow General Motors employee and joined the Flushing VFW Post 5666 in 1967. He quickly became involved in the Post and served as Post Commander in 1973-74, earning All-State Past Commander honors.

In 1976, he was elected Manager of District 10 in Michigan and earned All-State and All-American Honors. Jim has served as Director of many Post, District and Department committees. He was All-State Director and Membership Director in Michigan.

In 1978, he was selected as Michigan's Young Veteran of the Year and became Michigan's first Vietnam veteran to be elected to the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief in 1980. He progressed through the chairs and earned All-American Department Commander honors in 1982-83.

Jim continued his VFW service by staying active in all organizations of the association and serving as Department Chief of Staff of Michigan from 1990 and '92, and on many other committees. He has a vast background from serving on many National Committees, which include Americanism, Youth Activities and Community Service.

He has been appointed as a Vice-Chairman of both the POW-MIA Committee as well as the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee. Jim was appointed previous years as Chairman of the National Legislative Committee. Jim transferred to Lapeer VFW Post 3149 after moving into the area and, of course, quickly became involved in many Post activities and continues to serve as the Past Adjutant.

Jim is retired from the AC Spark Plug Division of General Motors on October 1, 1997, with 35 years of service. During his employment, he

was instrumental in establishing the Veterans Committee within his union, serving as the committee chairman for 17 years. He served on the Genesee County Soldiers and Sailors Relief Commission for three years and was chairman for one.

He is also affiliated with the Military Order of the Cootie, the American Legion, the Moose and the Eagles. He is married to Janet Marie, and they have two sons, Jim and Jeff, and two grandchildren, Chris and Margaret Marie. It is my pleasure to place in nomination from the Department of Michigan for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars the name of James N. Goldsmith.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: For the purposes of a second, the chair recognizes John Harrow.

COMRADE JOHN HARROW (Post 3724 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Distinguished Guests at this Convention, it is indeed an honor for me on behalf of the great State of Michigan and as a personal friend to second the nomination of James Goldsmith for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Jim is a man of action, not just of words. During his year as Department Commander of our state, he implemented a cancer research program that is still active in our Department today. Over those years that Department has donated over three-quarters of a million dollars to Wayne State University for the purpose of cancer research.

In short, with Jim Goldsmith, what you see is what you get. He is a sincere, dedicated, hard-working VFW member who we, the 80,000 members of the Department of Michigan, think he will be a great asset in working with our great organization to lead the Veterans of Foreign Wars into a great exciting century, better than we had in this first one.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: For the purpose of a second, the chair recognizes John Winslow.

COMRADE JOHN WINSLOW (Post 4139 - Michigan): Thank you, Comrade Commander and distinguished members of the VFW. I am from Post 3139, Lapeer, Michigan. It is my honor and also the honor of the members of the Post to have the opportunity to second the nomination for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief one of our own members, Jim Goldsmith. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Are there any other nominations for the office of National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Hearing none, nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

At this time we will have nominations for the office of Quartermaster General. Making the nomination will be Bill Radigan.

NOMINATION OF QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

COMRADE WILLIAM RADIGAN (Post 3061 - South Dakota): Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Delegates to this Convention:

It is my pleasure today to be picked to make the nomination for Joe

Ridgley for the office of Quartermaster General. Joining me at the podium are some distinguished people from the administrative field of this organization. Representing the Eastern Conference is Stan King, Quartermaster of the Department of Massachusetts, the Western Conference, Darrell Bencken, Adjutant/Quartermaster from the Department of Kansas.

The Southern Conference, Precilla Wilkewitz, Quartermaster/Adjutant of Louisiana; and representing the Big Ten is Paul E. Connors of the Department of Missouri.

In 1970 an ambitious young man took a big step towards life. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of Missouri. That same year this young man joined the United States Navy. He served for five years and was deployed to Vietnam twice. He served with distinction and with honor.

In 1976, this young man was looking for a job. He went to the VFW National Headquarters and he applied and he was hired. He became the Administrative Assistant to the Quartermaster General. He recognized that if he were going to advance in this organization, he had to learn it from the bottom up. That he did.

From 1977 to 1985, he served as the Director of Life Membership, Purchasing and the dues per capita tax. In 1985, he became the Director of the VFW Supply Department. He served in that capacity until 1991. The wisdom of this organization recognized that he had great potential and was well-prepared.

In 1991, he was appointed Assistant Quartermaster General. In 1995, this organization elected him to the high office of Quartermaster General, which he still holds to this day. I am humbled when I think of what this individual has done to prepare himself for service, to serve this organization, both mentally and physically.

The Quartermaster General is a tough job. You have to be able to physically handle it as well as mentally. I think we have a wonderful individual in Joe Ridgley. I think he is well prepared to see us through some changes, some different times, and I think he is prepared to tell us in a simple statement that there will always be money in the bank as long as he is handling our finances.

I am so proud today to nominate a comrade that I admire greatly, both as an individual and as a National Officer. I think that those of us that know him well feel that way. He is not to us just an officer. He is a co-worker, and the kind of man we need for this great organization.

So I feel humble but very honored to place in nomination today for the high office of Quartermaster General the name of Joe L. Ridgley from Post 8220, Belton, Missouri, a great guy.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: For the purposes of a second, the chair recognizes Paul Connors.

COMRADE PAUL CONNORS (Post 30 - Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and delegates to our 100th Anniversary, I could not

be more pleased today than to represent the Big Ten and the State of Missouri. As you know, Missouri is the Show Me State. I hope we have shown you, with great help from the State of Kansas, that this convention was a most tremendous success.

Joe's success speaks for himself now and in the past, and I believe that he will carry us forward into the future. His successes are the main assets. He has another asset, and we point to that in the State of Missouri every occasion that we can.

He speaks to you from right here. This emblem is in his heart. He is first a member and second an officer, and third a great friend of this organization. I second the nomination of Joe Ridgley as our Quartermaster General for the future.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Are there any other nominations for the office of Quartermaster General? Hearing none, nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

At this time we will have the nominations for the office of Surgeon General. Making that nomination will be Past Commander-in-Chief Billy Ray Cameron.

NOMINATION OF SURGEON GENERAL

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CAMERON: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. It is with great pleasure that I have the opportunity to nominate Curtis O. "Doc" Bohlman for the high office of Surgeon General. He was born in a rural area of Oklahoma and graduated from high school in Oklahoma.

He attended the University of Oklahoma in pre-med for three years before studying at the University of Oklahoma School of Medicine from 1962 to 1965. He received his Doctor's Degree in July, 1965, and a rotating internship in Mercer College Hospital in Oklahoma City, July, 1965, through July, 1966.

Then he was in the United States Navy Reserves from September, 1966. He attended the Naval Aerospace Medical Institute in Pensacola, Florida, and earned his flight service wings in 1967. He volunteered for duty with the United States Marine Corps in Vietnam, served as the first flight surgeon for VM-0-2 Huey gun ship, at Marble Mountain in Vietnam in the Da Nang area.

He received all the Vietnam medals, the Presidential Unit Citation, and was honorably discharged. He was in the general practice of medicine, and he did that for 20 years in rural Oklahoma, a practice in the private sector. He was Board certified in family practice in 1977.

He currently serves as the facility division for the William S. Kay Correctional Center, Department of Corrections for the State of Oklahoma. He was afforded the Oklahoma Department of Corrections Community Service Award in 1991. He joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars in 1975, becoming a Life Member in 1977.

I think it is important that I show you, if I read some of these positions he has held in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. This shows although he is a medical doctor and he has had a very successful practice, he also has been very active in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

In 1991-92, he served as All-American Post Commander, the Team Captain for the All-State Post Commanders, and also was elected Surgeon General for the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the first time. I think it is the first time in history that someone has been elected on the national level that was also an All-American at the same time.

In 1992-93, he was Chairman of the National Voice of Democracy. 1993-94, Vice-Chairman of the National Voice of Democracy Committee and Team Captain of the All-State District Commanders. He was Chairman of the Department of Oklahoma Voice of Democracy.

In 1995-96, he was elected Surgeon General. He served as the Chairman of the Oklahoma Voice of Democracy Chairman. He also has been an All-State Past Commander and he has been awarded many awards for recruiting in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

He presently serves on the National Home Board. Dr. Bohlman and his wife, Juanita, reside in Whitworth, Oklahoma, where he is a Life Member of Post 1335. It is with great honor that I present the name of Curtis O. "Doc" Bohlman for Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: For purposes of a second, the chair recognizes Ross Henry.

COMRADE ROSS HENRY (Post 125 - New York): Thank you, Comrade. Commander-in-Chief and delegates, I am honored to be here to second the nomination of "Doc" Bohlman. "Doc" and I serve on the National Home as Trustees and the time and effort he has spent on that alone has been an honor for every one that has anything to do with the Home.

Several times I have called his home in Oklahoma in the evening only to find that he was at his local Post working bingo. I wanted to point out that the man, even though he is going on the National level, still has his ties at home. Again, I am pleased to be here to second the nomination of Doc Bohlman.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: For purposes of a second, the chair recognizes Jay Bjorgo.

COMRADE JAY BJORG (Post 9263 - Oklahoma): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and National Officers, and comrades, it is with great honor that I stand up here to second the nomination of a very outstanding, distinguished man that I have the honor and privilege of calling my friend, Curtis "Doc" Bohlman.

This will be his third time going for Surgeon General, and he has worked hard. He has been the VOD Chairman in Oklahoma for six years,

and every year our program grows stronger and stronger. He is relentless in his efforts and is constantly working hard for us.

He has helped me on my staff and he has guided me. It is a great honor for me to second the nomination of "Doc" Bohlman for Surgeon General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Are there any other nominations for the office of Surgeon General? Hearing none, the nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

At this time we will have nominations for the office of Judge Advocate General for the year 1999-2000. Making the nomination will be Jim Dickens, Department Commander.

NOMINATION OF JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

COMRADE JAMES DICKENS (Post 5532 - Ohio): Commander-in-Chief Pouliot, National Officers and Delegates to this 100th Convention:

It is my pleasure to place in nomination the name of a comrade who is a Life Member of Post 5553, Bowling Green, Missouri, who served as the Department Commander in 1996-97. He obtained his eligibility through his service in Vietnam and is retired from the United States Army.

He currently is serving his seventeenth year as a Municipal Court Judge from the great Department of Missouri. It is my honor to nominate Donald Watts for the high office of Judge Advocate General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: For the purposes of a second, the chair recognizes Omar Kendall.

COMRADE OMAR KENDALL (Post 673 - Indiana): Commander-in-Chief Pouliot and comrades, I proudly second the nomination of Donald Watts for the office of Judge Advocate General. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Are there any other nominations for the office of Judge Advocate General? Hearing none, the nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

We will now have the nomination for the office of National Chaplain for the year 1999-2000. To make that nomination will be Past State Commander Ray Sisk.

NOMINATION OF NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

COMRADE RAY SISK (Post 9791 - California): Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, and certainly to you the comrades in this audience and delegates to this 100th Convention:

It is an honor and privilege to stand before you this morning and place in nomination the name of Cornelius P. O'Connor as the National Chaplain for the year 1999-2000. Let me assure you that here is a comrade that came over from Ireland at the age of 16, studied for the priesthood in New Jersey and New York.

He has been an outstanding member of our organization for 56 years. He has been a Post Chaplain most of the time in his service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He has been our Department Chaplain in California for ten years. He has been our Western Conference Chaplain for three consecutive years.

Pat is also a U.S. Navy veteran. He served in the Pacific during World War II. As I said, the 13th of this month he celebrated 56 years in the VFW. His nomination by me this morning is a real honor for me. I have known Pat for many, many years, and he has been an All-State Post Commander and he has worked in the VFW and he has been very instrumental in our National Prisoner of War and Missing in Action program.

He has all the things that are necessary to be our National Chaplain. We must remember our God, and he is one person that will certainly represent you, the comrades in this organization, to the best of his ability. I urge you to please vote for Pat. I am pleased to place in nomination the name of Cornelius P. O'Connor as our National Chaplain. Thank you so much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: For the purpose of a second, I recognize the State Commander Steve Jacob.

COMRADE STEVE JACOB (Post 5944 - California): Good morning, comrades. Commander-in-Chief Pouliot and our National Officers, I stand before you to second the nomination of Cornelius Pat O'Connor. I have known this comrade for over 20 years, and he is an exceptional Chaplain.

He is there when you need him and he is there when someone passes on. It doesn't make any difference whether in the State of California or not. He actually left yesterday to do a wedding for somebody yesterday. He is very active in this organization. He continues to work for the membership. He will bring in that second century with honors because he is an honorable person. I ask you to consider him as your National Chaplain. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Are there any other nominations for the office of National Chaplain? Hearing none, the nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS (Cont'd.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: I call to the microphone the Chairman of the General Resolutions Committee, Ray Soden.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SODEN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, National Officers and Delegates to this outstanding convention:

I rise to offer a motion on behalf of the Resolutions Committee and certainly the delegates of this convention which will cover three areas. Number one, is to have the Commander-in-Chief direct the Adjutant General to prepare a citation commending the city of our convention host and present this Citation, thanking them for their outstanding contributions,

their hospitality to this 100th Convention.

Secondly, that a Citation be prepared to be presented to the Adjutant General, the Quartermaster General and their staffs on behalf of all of us for the outstanding job in putting this convention together.

Thirdly, that a proper citation be prepared and presented to the Department of Missouri, the Show Me State, because they have shown us an outstanding convention. I move this be done.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. I will move the question. All those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carries.

At this time I would like to dismiss the General Resolutions Committee and thank the Chairman and the Committee for a job well done.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you will prepare us for our Closing Ceremonies.

(Whereupon, the Salute to the Colors was given at this time followed by the Closing Prayer by Father Neville.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies for today's Business Session have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. We will stand in recess until tomorrow morning at 9:00 o'clock.

(Whereupon, the session was recessed at 12:10 o'clock p.m.)

FOURTH BUSINESS SESSION
FRIDAY MORNING, AUGUST 20, 1999

(The Fourth Business Session of the 100th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the H. Roe Bartle Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri, was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare the room for our Opening Ceremonies.

SALUTE TO COLORS AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief. All rise, please, and face the flag of our nation, standing at attention and salute.

(Whereupon, Sergeant-at-Arms Hoffman led the convention in the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance at this time, followed by the Opening Prayer.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief Pouliot, the Opening Ceremonies for the final Business Session have been performed.

FINAL REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: I would like to introduce the members of the Credentials Committee so that they can be recognized. First, we have our chairman, who will report at this time, Richard Trombla.

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): Commander-in-Chief, I am Richard Trombla, Chairman of the Credentials Committee from Post 1174, Department of Kansas. Comrades, this is a final report at this meeting. The total delegates, 14,307. Department Commanders, 53; Past Commanders-in-Chief, 31; National Officers, 36, making a total of 14,429.

Commander-in-Chief, this is the final report of this committee. We would like to thank you for the honor and privilege we have had in serving you this year and we would like to be discharged.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: From Delaware, we have Elwood B. Rickards, and from Illinois, John Muscola. Thank you, comrades. At this time I will dismiss the Credentials Committee and thank you for a job well done. John is joining the Credentials Committee this year, because James Kennedy passed away, from Minnesota. So at this time we will just have a moment of silence.

Thank you, comrades and sisters. I would like to mention at this

time to Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak that you are in our prayers during this time.

COMPLETION OF CONVENTION BUSINESS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Is there any other business to come before this, our 100th Annual Convention? Hearing none, we will now proceed into the elections.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Yesterday, nominated for Commander-in-Chief was John W. Smart. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations?

The chair recognizes John Packard.

COMRADE JOHN PACKARD (Post 8546 - New Hampshire): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I make a motion that the nominations be closed and the Adjutant General cast one ballot for John W. Smart as National Commander-in-Chief.

COMRADE ROBERT MADIGAN (Post 483 - New Hampshire): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, we have a motion and a second. All in favor will say "aye"; all opposed. The motion carried.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, it is an honor and a privilege for me to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of John W. Smart as Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 1999-2000 year.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, yesterday placed in nomination for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief was the name of John F. Gwizdak.

The chair recognizes R. D. "Bulldog" Smith.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF R. D. SMITH: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I am R. D. "Bulldog" Smith, a delegate from VFW Post 4346, Department of Georgia. I now ask that the nominations be closed for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief and that John F. Gwizdak be elected to that high position. I ask the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous vote for the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak.

COMRADE WILLIAM JOHNSON (Post 658 - Georgia): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. All those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carried.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, as the

Adjutant General, it gives me great pleasure to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of John F. Gwizdak, Jr., as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the year 1999-2000.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, yesterday nominated for the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief for 1999-2000 was James N. Goldsmith. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations?

The Chair recognizes Comrade Harold.

COMRADE JOHN HAROLD (Post 3724 - Michigan): I move that the nominations be closed for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for James N. Goldsmith for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMRADE KENNETH SNOW (Post 6977 - Maine): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, you have heard the motion and a second. All those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carries.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, the Adjutant General is proud to cast one ballot for the unanimous selection of James N. Goldsmith to the high office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the year 1999-2000.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, for the office of Quartermaster General, for the year 1999-2000, the name of Joe L. Ridgley has been placed in nomination. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations?

The chair recognizes Bob Newell.

COMRADE BOB NEWELL (Department of Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that nominations cease and that the Adjutant General cast a unanimous ballot for Joe L. Ridgley for the office of Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

COMRADE JIM MUELLER (Department of Missouri): I am proud to second the nomination for a very dedicated and hard working individual.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, you have heard the motion. All those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carries.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, as the Adjutant General it is a privilege for me to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Joe L. Ridgley for Quartermaster General for the year 1999-2000.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, placed in nomination for the office of Judge Advocate General for the year 1999-2000 was the name of Donald W. Watts. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations?

The chair recognizes Bob Newell.

COMRADE BOB NEWELL (Department of Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that nominations cease and that the Adjutant General cast a unanimous ballot for Donald W. Watts for Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMRADE JAMES MUELLER (Department of Missouri): I second the nomination.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: You have heard the motion. All those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carries.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, the Adjutant General casts one unanimous ballot for the election of Donald W. Watts for Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the year 1999-2000.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Ladies and delegates, for the office of Surgeon General for the year 1999-2000, is the name of Curtis O. "Doc" Bohlman. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations?

The chair recognizes Larry LeFebvre.

COMRADE LAWRENCE LeFEBVRE (Post 552 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move the nominations be closed and the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for Dr. Curtis Bohlman for the office of Surgeon General for the ensuing year.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, you have heard the motion. All those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carries.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, it is a privilege for me to cast one unanimous ballot for Curtis Bohlman for Surgeon General for the year 1999-2000.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Placed in nomination for the office of National Chaplain for the year 1999-2000 was the name of the Reverend C. Pat O'Connor. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations?

The chair recognizes Jim Rowoldt.

COMRADE JAMES ROWOLDT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that the nominations be closed and that Pat O'Connor be elected as National Chaplain. Also that the Adjutant General be instructed to cast a unanimous ballot for Pat O'Connor for the office of National Chaplain for the ensuing year.

COMRADE RICHARD EUBANK (Department of California): I would like to second the nomination for Pat O'Connor for National Chaplain.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: You have heard the motion. All in favor will say "aye"; all opposed. The motion carried.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrade Commander, I cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Pat O'Connor as National Chaplain of

the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 1999-2000.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Ladies and gentlemen, that completes the election of the National Officers for the ensuing year 1999-2000. Let's hear it one more time for all of these National Officers.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: For purposes of announcements, the chair recognizes our Adjutant General John Senk.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS-ELECT BY ADJUTANT GENERAL

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: At this time, the Commander-in-Chief-Elect will present the incoming Council members with their caps. Sergeant-at-Arms, please present the Commander-in-Chief-Elect for presentation of the caps.

Representing Council District No. 1, Maine and New Hampshire, Donald W. Linscott, Jr, Post 1603.

Representing Council District No. 3, Maryland and New Jersey, William Goode, Post 809.

Representing District No. 5, Indiana and Missouri, Omar F. Kendall, Post 673.

Representing Council District No. 7, Tennessee and Kentucky, John Furgess, Post 1970.

Representing Council District No. 9, South Carolina and North Carolina, William J. Jolin, Post 6087.

Representing Council District No. 11, Wisconsin and Iowa, Curt J. Taylor, Post 1318.

Representing Council District No. 13, Nebraska and Kansas, Billy C. Smith, Post 7028.

Representing Council District No. 15, New Mexico, Colorado and Arizona, Vincent J. Mitchell, Post 9972.

Representing Council District No. 17, Utah, Nevada and Oregon, Charles D. Fuller, Post 966.

Representing Council District No. 19, Louisiana and Mississippi, W. Hugh Long, Post 6743.

Representing District A, Pennsylvania, Allen Q. Jones, Post No. 21.

Representing Council District B, Illinois, Clyde F. Davis, Jr., Post 1604.

Representing Council District C, New York, George S. Smith, Post No. 53.

Representing Council District No. F, Michigan, Ernest E. Myers, Sr., Post 4090.

Representing Council District G, California, Robert J. Maxwell, Post 1932.

Representing District J, Florida, Robert M. Sprute, Post 5625.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF APPOINTMENTS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Congratulations to all those new Council members on their election.

At this time for purposes of announcement of appointments, the chair recognizes the Commander-in-Chief-Elect John Smart.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT SMART: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Thank you all, comrades, sisters and friends. It is indeed an honor for me this morning to make the following appointments:

For Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, John J. Senk, Jr.

National Chief of Staff, Arthur E. Koch, III, Post 6780, New York.

For Inspector General, John J. Zuba, Sr., Post 1034, Vermont.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The Commander-in-Chief-Elect has selected Past Commander-in-Chief Bob Wallace to be his installation officer. Please escort Past Commander-in-Chief Bob Wallace to the dais.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am very honored and pleased to present to you the installing officer for the 100th Anniversary celebration, Past Commander-in-Chief Bob Wallace.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

INSTALLING OFFICER WALLACE: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the term for which you and your subordinate officers were elected or appointed has now expired. Before we proceed with the installation ceremony, I must ascertain the following. Have the officers for the ensuing year been duly elected?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER WALLACE: Have the books of the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General been examined and approved by the National Council of Administration?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER WALLACE: Does the Adjutant General have on file proof of eligibility of all officers to be installed during this installation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: He has.

INSTALLING OFFICER WALLACE: I would remind any officer not having proof of eligibility on file and not being installed at this time, the By-Laws prescribe that you must within 60 days of election or appointment submit to the Adjutant General for his file a copy of eligibility.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, are the funds in the hands of the Quartermaster General ready to be turned over to his successor when duly installed?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: They are.

INSTALLING OFFICER WALLACE: Do you have the Charter in your possession?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: I do.

INSTALLING OFFICER WALLACE: You will now give the gavel to me. Now, Past Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot, you have now been relieved of your duties as Commander-in-Chief of this organization. It is proper to remind you that in assuming the chair of Past Commander-in-Chief it will be your duty and privilege to counsel and otherwise assist your successor through the experiences that you have gained during your term of office. You will now station yourself at my right.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now present the officers-elect at the alter as the Adjutant General reads the list of officers to be installed. I will note that the Commander-in-Chief will take the Oath of Office with the rest of the Council of Administration as well as his own oath.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The officers are as follows:

Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	-	John F. Gwizdak, Jr.
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	-	James N. Goldsmith
Quartermaster General	-	Joe L. Ridgley
Judge Advocate General	-	Donald W. Watts
Surgeon General	-	Dr. Curtis Bohlman
National Chaplain	-	C. Pat O'Connor
National Chief of Staff	-	Arthur E. Koch, III
Inspector General	-	John J. Zuba, Sr.

National Council Members are as follows:

District No. 1	-	Donald W. Linscott, Jr.
District No. 2	-	Bradley F. Reynolds
District No. 3	-	William Goode
District No. 4	-	G. P. "Jerry" Miserandino, Sr.
District No. 5	-	Omar F. Kendall
District No. 6	-	Bobby Walls
District No. 7	-	John Furgess
District No. 8	-	Ray E. Brooks
District No. 9	-	William J. Jolin
District No. 10	-	Eugene H. George
District No. 11	-	Curt J. Taylor
District No. 12	-	Richard J. Belling
District No. 13	-	Billy C. Smith
District No. 14	-	George F. Riedel
District No. 15	-	Vincent J. Mitchell
District No. 16	-	Thomas I. Elliott
District No. 17	-	Charles D. Fuller
District No. 18	-	Ronald Rusakiewicz
District No. 19	-	W. Hugh Long
District A	-	Allen Q. Jones
District B	-	Clyde F. Davis, Jr.
District C	-	George S. Smith

District D	-	Craig D. Swartz
District E	-	Donald L. Gates, Jr.
District F	-	Ernest E. Myers, Sr.
District G	-	Robert J. Maxwell
District H	-	Alexander Vernon
District J	-	Robert M. Sprute
Past Commander-in-Chief	-	Thomas A. Pouliot
Adjutant General	-	John J. Senk, Jr.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 1999-2000 is John W. Smart.

INSTALLING OFFICER WALLACE: Will you remain standing, please. National Officers-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I will administer to you your Officers' Obligation.

You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of your country with your left hand and touch the shoulder of the comrade next to you and repeat after me.

(Whereupon, the following Officers' Obligation was given at this time: "I do hereby solemnly promise that I will faithfully discharge to the best of my ability the duties of the office to which I have been elected or appointed, according to the By-Laws and Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I solemnly promise that at the close of the term to which I have been elected or appointed, or sooner if so ordered by proper authority, I will surrender immediately to only the duly authorized person or persons, all records, money, or other properties of this organization in my possession or under my control. All this I freely promise, upon my honor, as a loyal citizen of our great Republic. So help me God.")

INSTALLING OFFICER WALLACE: As you were.

National Chaplain, you will deliver the prayer.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN THOMAS NEVILLE: Almighty God, our guide and divine protector, give Thy blessings upon these, our comrades, who now become National Officers. We beseech you, O Lord, who art ever present amongst us, grant wisdom unto them so that in their deliberations they continue to favor Thee, our glorious country and to the betterment of our organization.

May your strength sustain them and may your power preserve them, and may your hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of their duties. Amen.

INSTALLING OFFICER WALLACE: The audience may be seated. National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now escort the officers to their respective stations where they will remain.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir.

INSTALLING OFFICER WALLACE: National Officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, you now occupy positions of honor to which you have been elected or appointed. Learn well the responsibilities entrusted to you so that you may intelligently discharge the

duties you are to undertake. The By-Laws and Ritual of our organization prescribe in detail the duties of your respective offices.

By virtue of the confidence placed in you, through your election or appointment, we assume you will thoroughly acquaint yourselves with your duties. Council members, you may be seated.

The National Sergeant-at-Arms will now escort the Commander-in-Chief-Elect to his office.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Past Commander-in-Chief and Installing Officer for this 100th Anniversary celebration, I am honored and proud to present to you the Commander-in-Chief-Elect John W. Smart.

INSTALLING OFFICER WALLACE: Commander-in-Chief-Elect John W. Smart, before administering your obligation, it is proper to remind you of certain duties. You will be held responsible for the Charter of this organization and at the end of your term of office surrender it to the officer to install your successor.

It will be your duty to see that all National Officers perform their duties to the best of their ability. You shall keep yourself informed of all proposed legislation which may affect, or potential affect, the welfare of members of our organization, and strive for adoption of only those measures which will be beneficial.

You will be required to devote all your time to the many duties of your office. You are expected to make a special study of the By-Laws and Ritual of this organization so that you may render firm and impartial decisions on important matters referred to you.

As Commander-in-Chief, you will be regarded by your comrades and by the general public as typifying wise and vigorous leadership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. May all of your efforts and accomplishments bring credit to your administration and our organization.

Comrade John W. Smart, are you willing to assume and ready to assume your solemn Obligation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT SMART: I am.

INSTALLING OFFICER WALLACE: Will the audience please stand. Comrade Commander-in-Chief John W. Smart, you will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left, give your name as I touch your head, and repeat after me.

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief-Elect Smart received the following Obligation: "In the presence of Almighty God and the Officers and Delegates of this Order here assembled, I, John W. Smart, do hereby solemnly promise that I will faithfully discharge, to the best of my ability, the duties of the office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, to which I have been elected in accordance with the By-Laws and Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I solemnly promise that at the close of the term to which I have been elected, or sooner if so ordered by proper authority, I will surrender immediately to only the duly authorized person or persons, the National Charter, all records, money and other properties of this organization in my

possession or under my control.

"I do further solemnly promise that I will be fair and impartial in all my actions towards all comrades, and I will always strive to promote the best interests of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. So help me God.")

INSTALLING OFFICER WALLACE: I would ask the Council members to please remain and all Past Commanders-in-Chief to also remain standing. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I now place in your possession the Charter, and I also present you with this gavel, which is the emblem of your authority. Use it firmly but with discretion.

All National Officers and all Past Commanders-in-Chief and Comrades, you stretch forth your right hand and repeat after me: "To you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief John W. Smart, to you I pledge my sincere allegiance."

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, National Officers and Delegates of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, at this 100th convention, I now proclaim the National Officers duly installed and this organization is in good working order for the ensuing year.

Commander-in-Chief, may I be the first one to congratulate you and wish the "New Century of Service" nothing but the best success for the betterment of veterans in the military of this nation.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

PRESENTATION OF CAPS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you all so very, very much. At this time I would like to present the newly-elected officers with their caps.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: At this time we will present the caps to the newly-elected officers. First is Commander-in-Chief John W. Smart. His cap will be placed on his head by his wife Mary.

Placing of the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak's cap is by his wife, Betty.

Next will be Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief James N. Goldsmith, by his wife, Jan.

Next is Quartermaster General Joe L. Ridgley, by his wife, Judy.

Judge Advocate General Donald Watts will have his hat placed on his head by the Commander-in-Chief.

Surgeon General, Dr. Curtis Bohlman, will have his hat placed on his head by his wife, Juanita.

National Chaplain Pat O'Connor will have his hat placed on his head by his wife, Millie.

National Chief of Staff, Arthur E. Koch, III, will have his hat placed on his head by his wife, Brenda.

Inspector General John J. Zuba, Sr., will have his hat placed on his

head by the Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Placing the cap on the head of our Adjutant General is his son, Sean.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: I think we are going to have a year full of surprises. Placing the pin on the lapel of the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief will be his son, John.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I call to the podium now the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak for the presentation of the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief's pin. At this time the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief will pin the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief's pin on James N. Goldsmith.

At this time I would like to call to the podium for his remarks the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, John W. Gwizdak.

REMARKS BY SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. It is your day, so we will keep our remarks mostly limited. May I say this, I thank the good Lord for giving me the opportunity to be here and for returning me from a place of war so that I could serve our veterans again.

To my family, Betty, Ray, those seated on the dais, and my Georgia family, thank you so much for putting me here. And to my family in the audience, thanks again for what you have done for me. The opportunity to serve veterans is not a responsibility but an honor.

When we serve veterans on a daily basis, we know one thing, it is impossible to do anything wrong because everything that we do is done for some reason. Those veterans that need it the most, you know they have to have it from us because this ungrateful nation so often has forgotten them. You and I need to make that difference.

It is hard to believe that after 223 years, after the first shots that were fired on that bridge up north and when the blood ran through the decks of that bridge into that soft rolling water, when the contract was written with America's veterans that we should stand here today and have to beg and plead to be cared for after we have protected America, carried the flag in all different parts of this world and to see today that you and I still have to stand up here and say we need to be cared for, the orphans and widows. It is a shame that America can work that way. You and I have to make a difference.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, to you I pledge my sincere allegiance. You are pledged my commitment and those of us that sit in this audience today know one thing, we are in a "New Century of Service". God loves you, America needs to love you and you know I love you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: At this time I call James Goldsmith to the podium for his remarks.

REMARKS BY JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Commander-in-Chief John Smart, let me just take a few minutes. I will be brief because today is your day. First, I would like to just have my family stand up and be recognized. They have put up with so much to allow us to do the things that we do.

First is my beautiful wife Jan. Thank you so much. Next would be the delegates from Michigan. John, today is your day and I can only say to you I pledge to you my wholehearted support. I don't much care what happens next year or what happens two years down the road, but I feel we are going to be successful this year under John Smart's leadership.

My friends, success breeds more success. I heard once that it is not important what I do, and that is probably true, but what is important is what you do for I cannot move a mountain, but two million people can move a mountain. We are going to move some mountains this year.

Once again, thank you for allowing me to serve as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Remember one other thing, keep life simple and God bless.

PRESENTATION OF PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAPEL PIN AND GOLD LIFE MEMBERSHIP CARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: At this time for a presentation, I would like to call to the podium Past Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot and his wife, Shirley. Shirley will now present the Past Commander-in-Chief with his lapel pin.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, it is my privilege and honor on behalf of the two million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to present to you your Gold Life Membership Card on behalf of all of us. Thank you for an outstanding "Volunteer Service" year.

At this time please welcome Past Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot for his remarks.

REMARKS BY PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much, comrades, and especially my sisters in the Ladies Auxiliary. We have had an outstanding year. I believe that we have moved the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary in the cause of veterans forward. I know in this "New Century of Service" our veterans will be even better served.

At this time I would like to say on behalf of myself and my wife, Shirley, we appreciate all of the courtesies and hospitality. We will remember you always, but especially we will remember your friendship. We thank you. As we traveled to your Posts, your Auxiliaries and your Departments, you have always made us feel right at home. We appreciate

that. God bless you for the work you continue to do for our veterans.

ACCEPTANCE ADDRESS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: At this time I would like to take a moment and introduce some guests that are with me. Once again, my wife Mary Smart, and my son John, Jr., my brother-in-law and sister, Dana and Darlene, and two individuals that have recommended me for the office, Bob and Dottie Madigan and John Packard.

Before I give my acceptance speech, like many of you, many of our friends are not here today who put us where we are today. I know God is watching over us and they are with us today. I thank them up above. Thank you all so very much.

My most heartfelt thanks to all of you who made this day possible. First, I owe a debt of gratitude to all the men and women of the VFW for your selflessness and energy in sustaining this great organization, and for the confidence you have shown in me.

I offer my special thanks to my entire family, and particularly, my wife, Mary. Without the strength, sacrifices and endurance of all of you, without your commitment that I should serve, this day of pledging my service to God, country and my fellow veterans would never have occurred. I thank you all very much.

To all of the Post, District and Department Commanders, I thank you and praise your leadership in harnessing and directing this organization's strength and vitality in the service of veterans of our nation. I welcome you to the Smart, Gwizdak and Goldsmith team.

My special thanks to the Eastern States Conference for having brought me to this, the most humbling, yet proudest moment of my VFW life. Also thanks to my beloved Department of New Hampshire, also to former National Council District No. 1, Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont; and my Post, Post No. 483, and the Post that I first joined after Vietnam, Exeter Post No. 2181. And my most special thanks to the great ladies of our Auxiliary. Will all the ladies in the Auxiliary from New Hampshire, please rise and be recognized.

To my President, Lorraine Frier and all the members of the Ladies Auxiliary, I thank you for all that you do. You are true partners in all of our accomplishments, and I know that you will remain such as we move forward into a "New Century of Service."

I thank all of you for giving me the opportunity to lead the Smart, Gwizdak and Goldsmith leadership team. Under this leadership team, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall never waver nor relent in caring for America's true heroes, our nation's veterans and our active duty military personnel.

Let there be no question, we are a team, we are united and we are fully committed. I pledge to all of you here today and to all of those who came before us, who will follow tomorrow, I will answer your trust and

meet your expectations as the VFW's Commander-in-Chief.

There is no doubt in my mind that you did not elect me as the leader of this great organization to sit back in silence and watch as veterans' programs and entitlements are thanklessly eroded, even as our men and women in uniform are subjected to intolerable deprivations and insult.

As your leader, I pledge to you all of my spirit and strength — the Veterans of Foreign Wars and I will never relent or go silent — in the service of this nation's true heroes, our veterans and our military personnel.

For 100 years, the VFW has been the major force in America for veterans, our active duty forces in our communities. I fully intend that this proud tradition will continue and be expanded upon as we embark upon "a New Century of Service."

Toward this end, we as an organization must look to ourselves to see how we may cultivate our strengths and eliminate our weaknesses. As Commander-in-Chief, I am directing the establishment of a special Diversity Committee, with the mandate of determining how we may be more inclusive as an organization, how we may better address the concerns and issues affecting women, African-Americans, Hispanics and all groups of minority veterans who need and deserve to be represented by the Veterans of Foreign Wars strength.

Further, I have created a Military Affairs Committee that will concentrate on the very special needs of our active, Guard and Reserve forces. There may be no doubt that those who now stand in defense of our precious freedom, our sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters, nephews, nieces and neighbors, deserve the very best that we of the VFW and this great nation have to offer.

Finally, I have reformulated the National Legislative Committee to include a full-time member from each VFW state to concentrate on developing grassroots activism at the local level. In this way politicians will get to hear the VFW message loud and clear from those who matter most, those voting constituents who put and can keep them in elected office.

The new Legislative Committee kicks off in late September with an extensive training program in Washington on the workings of the Congress and organizing effective grassroots advocacy. Committee members will then march onto Capitol Hill to carry the VFW message directly and forcefully to their lawmakers.

Let the message go forward today to every political leader, Democrat, Republican or Independent, to each and every government bureaucrat and administration official, at all levels of government, that the VFW expects the very best this nation has to offer for our past, present and future defenders, and we will hold them accountable for their actions. We will not compromise on this philosophy, nor will we waver.

My comrades, we must never again tolerate allowing the Department of Veterans Affairs, the government body created in response to this nation's sacred obligation "to care for him who shall have borne the

battle and for his widow and his orphan" to be led by an individual too weak or indifferent to fully and properly champion veterans causes on Capitol Hill or within the administration."

We will make it abundantly clear to whomever would be President of this great nation, your Secretary of Veterans Affairs must be a true veteran's advocate. We will accept no less. My comrades, sisters and brothers, if necessary, we will take the appropriate action to remove him from office.

As we move forward into our "New Century of Service," we must enlist every VFW and Auxiliary member into our cause, so that we may multiply our success and build a solid foundation of achievement, to sustain us in the next millennium. And I believe in my heart and in my soul that we will succeed.

We possess a strength that will not be denied, a strength that flows from out of our nationwide grassroots membership, situated in communities and every congressional district throughout the nation. We have assets not to be equaled by any other organization.

With the expenditure of a great deal of time, energy and money, the VFW now has the computer technology in place where we can communicate seamlessly and with unprecedented speed throughout our entire organization nationwide. All of you who currently have Internet access, be sure to take advantage of this resource to stay in touch with our Kansas City headquarters and our VFW office through the VFW Home Page.

By doing so, you will know just what is going on with respect to our various community, civic, youth and patriotic programs. You will also be kept in the know regarding the goings on in our nation's Capitol and what steps need to be taken so that veterans' issues remain in the forefront. By utilizing the special legislative activism portion of the VFW Home Page, which contains direct congressional e-mail links along with legislative updates and the VFW's position on topical issues, you will be able to immediately communicate with your lawmakers in Washington, allowing the VFW to make its views known with greater accuracy and speed than ever before.

There are no more dedicated people than the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and our Ladies Auxiliary. Your strength of purpose is on constant display. In carrying out our numerous civic-minded programs, working with our youth, our hospitalized veterans, helping your neighbors in time of need, maintaining American values and patriotic ideals, you show the world that the VFW is willing to step forward and act even as numerous others meekly stand idly by and watch.

The time has now arrived where we must bring our strength, the VFW's collective force of will and purpose, fully to bear on this nation's lawmakers. Democrat, Republican or Independent, members of the House or the Senate, senior administration official or the President him or herself, there must be no doubt as to where the VFW stands.

Veterans' issues and military issues must become a top priority.

Any individual holding or seeking political office, who ignores this nation's obligation to her veterans, does so at their political peril, period.

Enough is enough. Veterans and our military personnel must be a priority of Congress and the administration.

I have heard it said that America's veterans need to again band together and march on Capitol Hill. Perhaps there is merit to this proposition. But I can tell you that if you give me 25 or so VFW and Auxiliary members wearing hats and other visible signs of who they are, to march on a local office or attend a town hall meeting of a Senator or Representative, that lawmaker in Washington will think there is a pro-veteran ground swell taking place among his constituents back home.

If we duplicate this action on our respective lawmaker's home turf nationwide, over and over again, the view in Washington will be that the legislative heavens have opened up in support of America's veterans. Nothing will be able to stand in our way.

There is nothing more effective, absolutely no substitute for informed, repeated activism by those who put politicians in office in the first place, the voting public. The potential effectiveness of a single march on Washington pales in comparison to what this type of protracted action by pro-veteran voters back home can accomplish.

This year we must do our utmost to get visibly involved in the election process. We must urge our fellow VFW and Auxiliary members, friends and family and veterans' supporters everywhere to not only register to vote, but to turn out voting in the primary and general elections wearing VFW caps, jackets and all manner of visible signs showing support of veterans' issues.

Voting alone, however, is not enough. Capitol Hill must come to understand that we stand ready, willing and able to back our friends and defeat our enemies. Visibility, commitment and involvement in the process are everything, pure and simple.

Make sure your fellow VFW and Auxiliary members, as well as other pro-veteran constituents, know which incumbents and candidates support our position on veterans, active duty military and defense. Perhaps more importantly, let them know those who do not support our positions.

It is high time that we hold our elected officials accountable for their actions. Kind words from elected officials on Memorial Day and Veterans Day must be matched with actions and votes in Washington.

When addressing our National Convention a few days ago, we applauded when the President told us that "the troops of tomorrow will only be as good as our commitment to veterans today." But now we must insist that he match this statement with action. He must lead the way in securing adequate VA funding, not hinder the process with low-budget proposals for veterans' health care.

Don't be taken in by a politician who asserts support for the Flag Amendment, but refuses to take a stand by voting in support of sufficient veterans' health-care funding, or proper staffing to take care of veterans'

claims and compensation.

On election days, we must turn out in droves, not as political partisans or proponents of diverse causes, but as veterans' advocates, a force that will not be denied, the united voice of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Working together nationally in support of pro-veteran lawmakers and candidates, we will succeed in electing a pro-veteran, pro-military Congress. And in so doing we will ensure that the next occupant of the Oval Office is pro-VFW as well.

We need to continue our fight for an adequate budget for VA health care and the VA Benefits Administration. We must insist that certain disabled veterans be guaranteed access to VA long-term care. Those serving today in our military need a new G.I. Bill for the 21st century to help their transition to civilian life. Quality of life issues, such as pay, housing and medical care for our brave men and women in the military must be addressed and changed to meet the demands of today's military mission. We need a GI bill for the 21st Century to care for all American veterans.

And we of the VFW must fight, fight with all our might, to ensure that our men and women in uniform are truly the best-trained, the best-equipped and the best-prepared military in the world. Inadequate defense funding will not be tolerated.

We must never allow America's best to be sent into harm's way without the full commitment of the Congress, the Administration and the American people to win.

I know you agree with me, that it is disgraceful, that any member of our military and their families would collect food stamps. Today, 11,000 of our troops are in that situation, and we must make the difference for them.

And none of us must ever forget or ignore the plight of their sons and daughters who are prisoners of war or missing in action.

Our fight is right, and only by being involved in the legislative process will we be able to make a difference. Legislative activism, you and I and all other VFW members, members of the Ladies Auxiliary and our supporters, getting visibly involved in the political process in support of VFW issues is the only way we can protect the future of veterans, members of the armed forces and their families. We can make a difference.

More than any other segment of the American public, we have earned the right to get involved. We have earned the right to make a difference. But along with our elected officials, we must hold ourselves accountable as well. Along with the service and sacrifices of this nation's former defenders in need, the great history and purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States demands no less of us.

Never forget, you and I are serving our organization at a very critical point in history. You and I must now set the course for the next century, just as the VFW's founders charted the course of our first millennium in 1899.

As the next millennium dawns, we must be cognizant that this is our year, and the future holds our challenges, and the time is now upon us to proudly lead this great organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars into "a New Century of Service." Thank you, comrades.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation.)

CLOSING CEREMONIES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I recognize Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE LARRY LeFEBVRE (Post 552 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Larry LeFebvre, a delegate from Post 552, Michigan. There being no further business to come before this convention, and the officers have been duly installed for the ensuing year, I move that this centennial convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States be closed sine die.

COMRADE JAMES VAN HARTER (Department of Michigan): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We have a motion and a second that is in order. Any discussion? There is no discussion. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. The motion is carried.

We will now go into our Closing Ceremonies. Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare the Closing Ceremonies for the 100th Anniversary Convention.

(Whereupon, the Honor Guard retired the Colors at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I will call on our National Chaplain, Pat O'Connor, for the Closing Prayer.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain O'Connor gave the Closing Prayer from the Ritual.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies for this magnificent 100th VFW celebration have been performed. Thank you for the honor, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. This closes the 100th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(Whereupon, the convention was duly adjourned at 11:00 o'clock a.m., sine die.)

AMENDMENTS TO NATIONAL BY-LAWS AND MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL

B-1 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 209—CONSOLIDATION OF POSTS.

Amend Section 209, National By-Laws, by deleting the first paragraph in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"If provided for in the Department By-Laws, two or more Posts may consolidate by authority of the Commander-in-Chief as prescribed in Section 209 of the Manual of Procedure." (Approved)

B-2 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 521—COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION—COMPOSITION, POWERS AND DUTIES.

Amend Section 521(a), National By-Laws, by deleting the fifth (5th) sentence in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"In the Departments of Alaska, District of Columbia, Hawaii and Latin America/Caribbean, the Commanders of all Posts in good standing shall be voting members of the Department Council of Administration." (Approved)

B-3 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 615—NATIONAL COMMITTEES.

Amend Section 615, National By-Laws, by deleting the first sentence of Section 615(a)(1) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"Composition: The National Veterans Service Committee shall consist of the Commander-in-Chief, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief and four Past Commanders-in-Chief." (Approved)

B-4 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 615—NATIONAL COMMITTEES.

Amend Section 615, National By-Laws, by deleting 615(d)(1) in its

entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"(1) Composition: The Political Action Committee shall consist of a Director, Treasurer and a seven (7) member Board of Directors.

The seven (7) member Board of Directors shall be appointed by the Commander-in-Chief. Two members shall be appointed each year for a three year term. One member, as recommended by the National President, Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, shall be appointed each year for a one year term. The Director and Treasurer shall be appointed annually by the Commander-in-Chief with the approval of the Board of Directors. The Commander-in-Chief may also appoint members to fulfill unexpired terms created by a vacancy on the Board." (Approved)

B-5 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 702—POLITICS.

Amend Section 702, National By-Laws, by deleting the words "Article I of the Constitution" in the fourth paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"Section 3 of the Congressional Charter" (Approved)

B-6 (Proposed by Department of New York)

SECTION 213—ARREARAGES.

Amend Section 213, National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"Any Post in arrears for National, Department, County Council or District dues, poppy money, supply money, or other financial obligations, or failing to have the office of Quartermaster bonded, or failing to submit quarterly Post Trustee Report of Audit or Post Election Report shall be deprived of all representation in County Council meetings, District, Department and National Conventions. Such representation shall be restored promptly upon proper adjustment of such deficiencies.

Further, while in such arrears, the Post, its officers and members, shall be ineligible for any awards from National, Department, District and County Council."

(Disapproved)

B-7 (Proposed by Department of South Carolina)

SECTION 216—ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICERS; CHAIRMEN AND COMMITTEES.

Amend Section 216 (a), National By-Laws, by inserting the word "Judge" in front of the word Advocate in the first paragraph.

Amend Section 216 further by inserting the word "Judge" in front of the word Advocate in the first sentence of paragraph 2 (a). (Approved)

B-8 (Proposed by Department of Ohio)

SECTION 610—OFFICERS, POWERS AND DUTIES.

Amend Section 610 (d) (14), National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"Prepare a tentative budget for the financial operations of the ensuing year. Said budget shall set forth all anticipated income and estimated expenses. It shall set forth the amount of all compensation to be received by each of the following officers for the ensuing year: (1) Commander-in- Chief; (2) Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief; (3) Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief; (4) Quartermaster General; (5) Judge Advocate General; (6) Surgeon General; (7) Chaplain; and, (8) Adjutant General. Restricted funds shall be budgeted separately in every instance, and the budget shall be in balance. The tentative budget shall be submitted to the Commander-in-Chief for consideration within ten (10) days following adjournment of the National Convention and final action must be taken on the adoption of the budget at the first stated meeting of the National Council of Administration, and when adopted the budget shall be the expenditure guide for the ensuing year. Not later than thirty (30) days after the first meeting of the National Council of Administration, he shall forward to all Department Commanders and all Post Commanders detailed copy of the national budget adopted by the National Council of Administration for their information." (Disapproved)

B-9 (Proposed by Departments of Massachusetts, Nevada, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Utah, Washington)

SECTION 617—REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS - HOW ELECTED.

Amend Section 617, National By-Laws, by deleting all Regional Districts 1 through 19 following the second paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

1. Maine, New Hampshire
2. Vermont, Massachusetts
3. Maryland, New Jersey
4. District of Columbia, Delaware
5. Indiana, Missouri
6. Virginia, West Virginia
7. Tennessee, Kentucky
8. Georgia, Alabama

9. South Carolina, North Carolina
10. Oklahoma, Arkansas
11. Wisconsin, Iowa
12. North Dakota, Montana
13. Nebraska, South Dakota
14. Washington, Idaho
15. New Mexico, Arizona
16. Alaska, Hawaii, Pacific Areas
17. Utah, Wyoming
18. Rhode Island, Connecticut
19. Louisiana, Mississippi
20. Kansas, Colorado
21. Oregon, Nevada
22. Europe, Latin America/Caribbean" (Disapproved)

B-10 (Proposed by Departments of Alaska, New Mexico, Pacific Areas)

SECTION 617—REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS - HOW ELECTED.

Amend Section 617, National By-Laws, by changing numerical designation 16 to read "16. Pacific Areas, Hawaii".

Further amend Section 617 by inserting directly after numerical designation 19. the following: "20". "Latin America/Caribbean, Alaska". (Disapproved)

B-11 (Proposed by Department of South Dakota)

SECTION 709—CONTROL OF UNITS.

Amend Section 709, National By-Laws, by deleting the word "including" in paragraph three lines five and twelve, and substituting in lieu thereof the word "except".

(Disapproved)

B-12 (Proposed by Departments of Illinois, New Jersey, North Dakota)

SECTION 711—BUDDY POPPY.

Amend Section 711, National By-Laws, by deleting the second paragraph in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"A tax of six cents (\$.06) shall be assessed against each and every VFW Buddy Poppy sold under the provisions of this section. Such tax shall be in addition to the cost of producing the Poppies and shall be payable to the National Headquarters and be distributed as follows. Two cents (\$.02) to the Veterans Service Fund of the Department having jurisdiction; two cents (\$.02) to the VFW National Home; two cents (\$.02) to the Veterans

Service Fund of the National Headquarters, provided that the Council of Administration of each Department shall determine the price at which poppies are sold to the Posts of that Department. Such price shall be sufficient to adequately cover the tax and cost of manufacture, distribution, and promotion of the poppies." (Disapproved)

B-13 (Proposed by Department of Kansas)

SECTION 720—DEFINITIONS.

Amend Section 720, National By-Laws, by deleting the second paragraph in its entirety and substituting in lieu thereof the following: "He, His, Him" as used in these By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, and Ritual, shall include both male and female persons." (Approved)

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MANUAL OF PROCEDURE

M-1 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 106 - FORMER MEMBERS-REINSTATEMENT.

Amend Section 106, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the fourth paragraph in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"A member who shall have been suspended from any Post by sentence of disciplinary action properly carried into execution, shall be placed in the Department Member-at-Large when the suspension has ended and may transfer in accordance with the provisions of Section 107 of the National By-Laws." (Approved)

M-2 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 209 - CONSOLIDATION OF POSTS.

Amend Section 209, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the first sentence of the second paragraph in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"If such consolidation be so approved, the name, number (must be one of the consolidating Post numbers) and location to be assigned the consolidating Posts must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of any and all the Posts consolidating present at a meeting called for such purpose, after at least two (2) weeks notice in writing has been given to all the members of the Posts concerned of such meeting and purpose."
(Approved)

M-3 (Recommended by the National By-Laws Review Committee.
Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 712 - NATIONAL HONOR GUARD.

Amend Section 712, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the third paragraph in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"For the purpose of government and for ceremonial purposes the National Honor Guard may adopt such by-laws and amendments thereto as are necessary for its proper government, not conflicting or inconsistent with the By-Laws, Rules and Regulations or the Congressional Charter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States which shall become effective upon review by the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States." (Approved)

M-4 (Proposed by Department of Connecticut)

SECTION 101 - ELIGIBILITY.

Amend Section 101, Manual of Procedure, by adding at the end of the section, a new eligibility category as follows:

"National Defense	27 June 1950
Service Medal	Indeterminate
(30 consecutive days	
or 60 days not	
consecutive duty	
outside continental	
limits of the United States)." (Disapproved)	

M-5 (Proposed by Department of South Carolina)

SECTION 218 - OFFICERS AND CHAIRMEN, DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS.

Amend Section 218, Manual of Procedure, (a) (8) by deleting subtitle in its entirety and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"Duty of Judge Advocate."

Further amend Section 218 by inserting the word "Judge" in front of the word Advocate in the first sentence of Section (a) (8). (Approved)

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RITUAL

R-1 (Recommended by the National By-Laws Review Committee.
Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual, page 21, by deleting the word "Constitution" in the fifth line.

(Approved)

R-2 (Recommended by the National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual, page 29, by deleting in its entirety "Q: Do you promise, on your word of honor, to abide by the Constitution, By-Laws and Ritual of this order?" and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"Q: Do you promise, on your word of honor, to abide by the Congressional Charter, By-Laws and Ritual of this order?"

(Approved)

R-3 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual - INSTITUTING NEW POST, page 43, by deleting the word "Constitution" in the second paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"National By-Laws"

(Approved)

R-4 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual - INSTITUTING NEW POST, page 43, by deleting the word "Constitution" in the third paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"National By-Laws"

(Approved)

R-5 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual, page 45, by deleting the words "Constitution and" in the next to the last paragraph.

(Approved)

R-6 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual, page 46, by deleting the words "Constitution and" in the first Instituting Officer statement.

(Approved)

R-7 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual, page 47, by deleting the words in the statement of the Instituting Officer "The VFW Constitution, Ritual and the By-Laws of our organization prescribed in detail the duties of your offices." and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"The By-Laws of our organization prescribe in detail the duties of your offices."

(Approved)

R-8 (Proposed by Department of Kansas)

Amend the Ritual, page 2, by deleting the first sentence under General Rules in its entirety and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"This Ritual may not be changed except by the National Convention, provided that the words "She, Hers, or Her" may be substituted for the words "He, His, or Him" in any ceremonies contained herein when it is appropriate to the gender of the person."

(Disapproved)

RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

No. 201 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

ELIMINATE GENDER SPECIFIC LANGUAGE IN THE VFW CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER AND BY-LAWS, AND MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL

(Disapproved)

No. 202 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

EXTEND AGE CAP FOR THE SONS OF THE VFW

(Disapproved)

No. 203 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

ELIMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS DISCRIMINATION

(Disapproved)

No. 204 (Submitted by Department of Kentucky)

DISCONTINUE LIFE MEMBERSHIP CARD REPLACEMENT FEE

(Disapproved)

No. 205 (Submitted by Department of Oregon)

ELIMINATE THE USAGE OF THE WORD "FRATERNAL" IN THE VFW
CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER AND BY-LAWS, AND MANUAL OF
PROCEDURE AND RITUAL

(Disapproved)

No. 206 (Submitted by Department of Oregon)

YOUTH RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Civil Air Patrol and U.S. Naval Sea Cadet programs be added to the list of children and youth programs receiving recognition by citation and medal/ribbon; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Headquarters issue a proclamation thereto. (Approved as Amended)

No. 207 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)

DIRECT THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION TO URGE
THE LADIES AUXILIARY OF THE VFW TO AMEND THEIR BY-LAWS SO
THAT NON U.S. CITIZENS WHO OTHERWISE QUALIFY FOR
MEMBERSHIP MAY BECOME MEMBERS OF THE LADIES AUXILIARY

(Disapproved)

No. 208 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)

ADJUSTMENT TO TOTAL POST MEMBERSHIP DUE TO DEATH

(Disapproved)

No. 209 (Submitted by Department of Vermont)

PUBLISH VOTING RECORDS TOWARDS VETERANS' BENEFITS AND
PRIVILEGES OF EACH MEMBER OF CONGRESS

(Disapproved)

No. 210 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)

LIFE MEMBERSHIP CARDS -

(Disapproved)

No. 211 (Submitted by Department of Pennsylvania)

SONS OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AGE RESTRICTION
REMOVED

(Disapproved)

No. 212 (Submitted by Department of California)

REQUIREMENT FOR VFW NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS TO VERIFY
RECRUIT ELIGIBILITY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America require recruited members-at-large to provide documented proof of eligibility, exactly as required by individual Posts.
(Approved)

No. 213 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

LIFE MEMBERSHIP REPLACEMENT CARDS (LOST OR MISPLACED)

(Disapproved)

No. 214 (Submitted by Department of Washington)

URGE CONGRESS TO MODIFY THE VFW CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER

TO INCLUDE ALL "COLD WAR" GERMANY VETERANS WITH 30
CONSECUTIVE DAYS OR 60 BROKEN DAYS FROM 5 MAY 1955
THROUGH 2 OCTOBER 1990

(Disapproved)

No. 215 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)

COLD WAR RESOLUTION

(Disapproved)

No. 216 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

MEMBERSHIP FOR THOSE STATION AT
GUANTANAMO BAY NAVAL BASE, CUBA

(Disapproved)

No. 217 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

AGE RESTRICTIONS - SONS OF THE VFW

(Disapproved)

CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

No. 301 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REQUEST FOR CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW OF
THE FEDEREL FLAG CODE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon our representatives in the Congress of the United States to have a complete review of the existing Federal Flag Code so that we secure consistent respect for the flag of the United States of America.
(Approved)

No. 302 (Submitted by Department of Florida)

FUND OUR VETERANS EARNED ENTITLEMENTS WITH OUR
CONSTITUTIONAL POWER

(Disapproved)

No. 303 (Submitted by Department of Louisiana)

RESCIND OCCUPATIONAL TAX

(Disapproved)

No. 304 (Submitted by Department of Louisiana)

SUPPORT LAW ENFORCEMENT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we commend all levels of law enforcement for their outstanding service that has been bestowed to the community and nation for their dedicated service and untiring efforts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that our citizenship cooperate fully with police authorities and assist with knowledgeable facts pertaining to criminal acts. Above all, refrain from any cursing or throwing objects at them while carrying out their duties and mission of protection of society in this beloved nation. (Approved)

No. 305 (Submitted by Department of Louisiana)

NO ADDITIONAL STATES NECESSARY

(Disapproved)

No. 306 (Submitted by Department of New York)

PROCLAIM DECEMBER 7TH A NATIONAL HOLIDAY

(Disapproved)

No. 307 (Submitted by Department of Pennsylvania)

DECMEBER 7

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we fully support the passage of H.R. 965 designating December 7 as a federal holiday.

(Approved)

No. 308 (Submitted by Texas)

PASS LEGISLATION EXEMPTING DEPORTATION OF MEXICAN CITIZENS

WHO SERVED HONORABLY IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE
UNITED STATES

(Disapproved)

No. 309 (Submitted by Department of California)

RECOGNITION FOR THE REVEREND JESSE JACKSON

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we go on record commending the Rev. Jesse Jackson for his actions on behalf of the men and women of our armed forces. (Approved as Amended)

No. 310 (Submitted by Department of California)

THE MEDAL OF HONOR MEMORIAL

(Disapproved)

No. 311 (Submitted by Department of California)

STAMP HONORING AUDIE MURPHY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the post office department to honor this decorated hero, Audie Murphy, with a first class postage stamp. (Approved)

No. 312 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)

VFW SUPPORT FOR SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we re-affirm the right of all peaceable and law abiding individual citizens to keep and bear arms. (Approved)

**CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND POW/MIA**

No. 401 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT PUBLIC AWARENESS PROJECTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the National Organization will:

(a) Ensure routine distribution to the field of pertinent, credible and responsible information on a routine basis and, as requested, to provide such information about other POW/MIA organizations as may be needed by the Departments.

(b) Encourage participation in the program by veterans groups of other friendly nations such as our NATO and Far Eastern allies.

(c) Encourage exchange of information among State POW/MIA Chairmen to include publishing up-to-date lists of POW/MIA Chairmen; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each Department exercise maximum initiative to maintain the vitality and thrust of the POW/MIA program at Department levels by encouraging such actions as:

(a) Display of the black POW/MIA flag, subordinate to the U.S. Flag, at any function at which it is proper to fly the U.S. Flag.

(b) Encourage support of information exchange at Post levels.

(c) Appoint an interested member at the Post level to act as the POW/MIA project officer; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National Organization of the VFW supports the annual POW/MIA Recognition Day and the annual former POW Recognition Day. (Approved as Amended)

No. 402 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SEEK OPPORTUNITIES TO RESOLVE THE KOREAN WAR POW/MIA ISSUE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW urges North Korea to immediately repatriate the four sets of probable American remains they are holding and to abide by the terms of the current agreement with the United States to account for Americans still missing from the Korean War; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that with renewed vigor, the VFW urges the U.S. and Republic of Korea governments to increase their contact with the North Korea and Chinese governments, to pursue and expand the current joint effort to include the live POW issue and thus seek new opportunities to resolve this humanitarian issue as soon as possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW, in keeping with United States laws and in consultation with the Republic of Korea and U.S. governments, continue its contact with North Korea to resolve the current dispute and press for a renewal of the accounting of the over 8,200 Americans still missing and the investigation of reports of live Americans. (Approved as Amended)

No. 403 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VFW SUPPORTS KUWAITS DEMAND FOR

AN ACCOUNTING OF ITS MIAS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign of the United States, that we strongly urge the United Nations, the United States government and other governments to take such action as necessary either unilaterally, through our allies, or the United Nations, that will force Iraq to account for those Kuwaiti citizens still missing. (Approved)

No. 404 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

THE LESSONS OF THE COLD WAR

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the lessons of the Cold and Gulf Wars taught us that our peace, our freedom and our security can best be achieved by remaining united in common purpose with our many allies and friends whereby we share both the danger and security burden and by maintaining a national defense which in combination with our allies and friends, is equal to those continuing threats; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in contrast to the Korean and Vietnamese Wars, the lessons of the Gulf War are apparent: To ensure victory in future wars, the United States, led by resolute leadership and backed by unwavering public support, should quickly and decisively engage the full range of its military power until the threat to our security is eliminated. (Approved)

No. 405 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

LIMIT FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF U.S. BUSINESSES AND PROPERTIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to enact legislation to limit foreign ownership of United States corporations, companies, businesses and property, and industrial technologies and/or processes which could become vital or sensitive to the national defense of the U.S. and which will protect the economy of the United States. (Approved)

No. 406 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

TAKE ACTION ON THE IMMIGRATION PROBLEM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and the Congress in the strongest terms to heed these ominous warnings and focus their attention on the immigration problem; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we petition the President and the Congress to expand and strengthen the Customs and Immigration Services, the Border Patrol and the U.S. Coast Guard, and enact such emergency measures as necessary to prevent smuggling of illegal aliens and stop, detain and deport potential terrorists or those with ties to terrorist groups; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, as appropriate and when required, well trained and supervised military resources be employed to assist in stopping the flow of illegal aliens into the country. (Approved)

No. 407 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR CASTRO

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the U.S. government to continue its present policy of no trade with Communist Cuba and no diplomatic recognition of that communist state and to increase the economic and political pressure on Castro; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the U.S. government to use all measures, short of violence and/or invasion, to increase the pressure on Castro in conjunction with his isolation, to hasten the time until Castro's dictatorship is overthrown and Cuba can regain its freedom. (Approved)

No. 408 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PUNISH TERRORISTS NOW

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we continue to urge the U.S. to take decisive action against all terrorists and bring to justice those responsible for terrorist acts and to serve as a warning that all terrorists — no matter what country gives them refuge — will be hunted down and brought to justice; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we continue to urge decisive action in the war on terrorism by:

(a) Remaining on the offensive against terrorists rather than passively remaining on the defense.

(b) Instituting and pressing our allies to support a quarantine on those "rogue or outlaw states" guilty of inciting, harboring or aiding and abetting terrorists.

(c) Holding all countries accountable for the security of American citizens traveling within their borders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress should authorize and the President should declare a quarantine against the outlaw Qadhafi regime of Libya and other terrorist states found to support and harbor terrorists; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that our civilian leaders and military commanders should take all necessary steps to ensure U.S. servicemen and women stationed abroad are adequately protected against the threat of terrorist attacks and that both foreign governments and U.S. authorities be held accountable for such lapses in security that endanger the lives of our servicemen and women. (Approved)

No. 409 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

STRATEGIC DEFENSE IS A STRATEGIC PRIORITY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support both a deployable theater ballistic missile defense and a strategic ballistic missile defense before the end of this century as a priority defense requirement. (Approved)

No. 410 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HONORING THOSE WHO SERVE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW calls on all elected and appointed officials to publicly recognize the major contributions and sacrifices made by those in military service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that our elected and appointed officials acknowledge the professionalism of our servicemen and women by ending the erosion of entitlements and expanding the benefits of service and by so doing, show that this nation cares for those who unselfishly served and sacrificed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call on our elected officials to provide military pay raises that continue to close the "pay gap" between the military and private sector. (Approved)

No. 411 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE LIFTING THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT BAN ON HOMOSEXUALS IN THE ARMED FORCES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we unequivocally oppose the efforts of homosexual organizations and other organizations to force the military services to accept and/or retain homosexuals and urge that federal law (10 USC section 654) and implementing DOD policy which provides for the discharge of those engaging in homosexual conduct be consistently and properly enforced; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Uniformed Code of Military

Justice should be reviewed and, if necessary, revised in an effort to eliminate any possible question that any denial of civil rights is based on moral, religious or ethical behavior and that there is no intent to deny civil rights to any service member, rather our concern is to maintain the good order, discipline and readiness of our armed forces and their ability to operate effectively. (Approved)

No. 412 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE U.S. COAST GUARD

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress and the Administration to provide the funding necessary for the Coast Guard to carry out its mission and numerous tasks, including but not limited to, drug interdiction and enforcement, military readiness, pollution control, maritime safety, search and rescue missions as well as their many other duties and responsibilities. (Approved)

No. 413 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

STANDING FIRM FOR DEMOCRACY AND LIBERTY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we will always stand firm for liberty, and in furtherance of the ideals of liberty and democracy, we support a foreign policy that nourishes the newly won liberties in Europe and elsewhere, and we maintain our military strength against both the possibility of the reversal of Europe's liberties and the threats to other important regions of the world. (Approved)

No. 414 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

NATIONAL STRATEGY OF PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we continue to support a national strategy of peace through strength, the general principles of which should be:

(a) Maintaining a strong economy at home and protecting our overseas resources of energy and vital raw materials.

(b) Maintaining an American military presence in Europe and Asia to stabilize the military balance in these regions and help our friends and allies to defend themselves from aggression.

(c) Maintaining such strategic, nuclear and conventional military forces (including Active, Reserve and National Guard components) trained and equipped with such high technology weapons and equipment and with

sufficient bases and infrastructure which in the judgment of our military leaders are more than equal to the current threats and adequate to meet our current defense requirements.

(d) Helping formerly communist controlled countries in their process of converting to freely elected democratic governments.

(e) Maintaining effective security and intelligence capabilities to prevent strategic surprise from any quarter.

(f) Employing the leadership necessary to inspire, focus and unite the national will and international unity to further our goal of peace and freedom.

(g) Maintaining alliances as required by our national strategy, protect our national interests, support our friends and promote peace.

(Approved)

No. 415 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HALT THE EROSION OF INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we reject deep reductions in our national intelligence agencies, instead supporting appropriate expansion and funding to ensure that we will have adequate warnings of future political, military, economic or technological changes that would increase the risks to our national security and vital national interests abroad and that Congress appropriate necessary funds to strengthen the intelligence services. (Approved)

No. 416 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the government of the United States to increase its military aid and assistance to the Republic of Korea by providing modern state of the art weapons and technology to safeguard her freedom, and promote the security in the Pacific and Asian regions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the United States, in concert with its allies, bring pressure to bear on North Korea to comply with the nuclear safeguard accord of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to be a responsible country in the community of nations and to come to the table for peaceful dialogue directly between South and North Korea. (Approved)

No. 417 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT THE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that

to prevent further endangerment to our troops, we support the view that unless unforeseen circumstances arise, the U.S. forces assigned to Operation Joint Forge should be gradually withdrawn from Bosnia-Herzegovina while transferring remaining responsibilities to other NATO members. (Approved)

No. 418 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ASSIST VIETNAM'S RECOVERY OF MIAS AS A SIGN OF GOOD FAITH

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that at each level of the VFW—National, Department, District, County Council, Post—strenuous efforts be made to collect any information which might be of value in determining the fate of Vietnam's 300,000 MIAs and of assistance in the recovery of their remains; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge all levels of the VFW to solicit all Vietnam veteran members (and non-members) for any information or material that could be used to determine the fate of Vietnamese MIAs and their graves. Such information and material include battlefield souvenirs, especially if they contain names or other identifying information; personal effects such as photos, letters or identification documents taken from casualties; sketch maps, photos, overlays (annotated with dates and locations if possible) which would be of help in identifying Vietnamese grave sites; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VFW National Headquarters publicize this effort and provide Departments with materials which might be used in further publicizing our efforts and that the VFW Washington Office act as the collecting point and repository of all such information obtained from our members and the public at large; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that on subsequent trips to the region by VFW National Officers, such information be turned over to Vietnamese authorities as an expression of our desire to assist them in recovering their MIAs and to encourage their greater effort in helping us reach the fullest possible accounting of our MIAs.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 419 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE U.S. FORCES UNDER FOREIGN COMMAND

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose any plan or directive placing U.S. military forces under the command of foreign military officers including those who are operating exclusively under orders from the United Nations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress be urged to examine

Presidential Decision Directive 25 to determine if any Constitutional authority has been misused, and if so, to find an appropriate remedy.

No. 420 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that while recognizing the settlement of the legitimacy question remains an issue between the two countries, we support and urge the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan to the United Nations and other international bodies so those agencies can be useful in fostering a spirit of cooperation and assisting the resolution of the legitimacy question; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the President and the Congress of the United States to adhere strictly to the concepts of the Taiwan Relations Act by approving the sale to the Republic of China on Taiwan such state of the art military equipment, weapons and technology to include modern aircraft to the Republic of China on Taiwan as may be necessary to maintain adequate defense capabilities to provide for military balance and stability in the area; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the United States government to employ the full range of its economic, diplomatic and military influence if it is necessary to contain the overtly aggressive posture of the Peoples Republic of China and to use this influence to further the peaceful settlement of remaining disputes.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 421 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE DOWNSIZING THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT POW/MISSING PERSONNEL OFFICE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Defense not to downsize the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office because we believe such action would have a disastrous effect on achieving our goal of the fullest possible accounting of our POW/MIAs and would have the following dampening effects:

(a) It would slow the momentum of a POW/MIA effort that has taken years to develop.

(b) It would prevent us from taking full advantage of new opportunities that are becoming available to resolve this issue.

(c) It would send the wrong signal that the United States is downsizing its effort to recover our missing men to those countries where the search for our men still continues, or as in the case of North Korea,

where the search has just begun and the effort is expanding; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars goes on record as adamantly and unalterably opposed to any Department of Defense downsizing of the effort or of the resources put into the effort to reach the fullest possible accounting of our missing personnel. (Approved as Amended)

No. 422 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RETAIN THE SELECTIVE SERVICE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW goes on record as supporting the ongoing existence of the Selective Service System in its stand-by status and urges the United States Congress to provide the funds necessary to retain the Selective Service System. (Approved)

No. 423 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MONITOR THE PANAMA CANAL CAREFULLY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign of the United States, that we urge the President and the Congress to closely monitor conditions in the Republic of Panama, to be prepared to take whatever steps are necessary to protect the Canal and to ensure continued freedom of passage, and to carefully reexamine the conditions of Panama and the region before the scheduled turnover with a view to balancing the views, concerns and interests of Panama, its neighbors and the United States. (Approved)

No. 424 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

KEEPING FAITH WITH THE AMERICAN MILITARY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Defense and the Department of State to initiate changes

to the Status of Forces Agreements, the Geneva Conventions and other international agreements to improve the legal protections for United States military personnel and their families serving in foreign countries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Defense and the Department of State to periodically provide written, factual assurances to the Congress, the public and our military that legal protections have been put in place to bring to trial those guilty of murder, execution or assassination of members of our military service in foreign lands; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Congress of the United States

and the Administration find a solution and take the necessary steps to ensure that the El Salvador murders of LTC Picket and CPL Dawson are brought to trial and punished. (Approved)

No. 425 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMERICANS WHO ARE PRISONERS OF WAR OR MISSING IN ACTION

(Disapproved)

No. 426 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

NATO ENLARGEMENT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the enlargement of the NATO Alliance and the extension of the United States mutual defense commitment to the countries of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic as it is important to the security of that region, our own vital interests in the region as well as world peace; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this enlargement be accomplished in a non-threatening manner so as not to force other countries into an opposing alliance and that in order to project a peaceful image we urge consideration be given to adoption of a declared policy that U.S. forces and weapons will not be stationed, based or deployed (except for training) in the countries of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any future enlargement of NATO beyond the countries of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic be approached with careful analysis as to the costs, benefits and risks involved. (Approved)

No. 427 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REQUIRE ALL EIGHTEEN YEAR OLD CITIZENS TO REGISTER FOR MILITARY DRAFT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the President of the United States and the Congress of the United States to support legislation that would require all United States citizens, both male and female, be required to register for the Military Draft upon reaching their 18th birthday. (Approved)

No. 428 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

TIGHTEN U.S. POLICY ON HIGH TECHNOLOGY EXPORTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the President and the Congress to reverse the present U.S. policy on exporting American advanced "dual-use" technologies and supercomputers to China and Russia, and strengthen the rules that limit the export of American "dual-use" technologies to any country that poses a possible ballistic missile or any other significant threat to the U.S.; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Administration stop any U.S. commercial activity which facilitates the improvement of Chinese ballistic missile capability, and provides any information or technology that would provide new military capability, including any long-range missile technology, to any country that poses a significant threat to our nation without prior U.S. government authorization.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 429 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE FOR THE UNITED STATES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and the Congress of the United States to immediately accelerate efforts to develop and deploy a National Missile Defense System to protect the United States against an accidental or unauthorized ballistic missile launch; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Administration and the Congress to take immediate actions to stop the proliferation of ballistic missiles and technologies to any potentially hostile or rogue states and terrorist groups that may seek to target the United States directly with long-range missiles. (Approved)

No. 430 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASE THE DEFENSE BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and the Congress of the United States to take whatever steps are necessary to increase defense spending and reverse the fourteen-year pattern of declining defense budgets; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in light of the first federal budget surplus in three decades, and the current strength of the U.S. economy, we urge the nation's bipartisan political leadership to reopen negotiations on the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 in order to provide for a reallocation of national resources to the defense budget, and to sustain a period of real growth in defense spending. (Approved)

No. 431 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RESTORE PRE-ATTACK RANKS TO ADMIRAL HUSBAND E. KIMMEL
AND GENERAL WALTER C. SHORT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President of the United States to restore the honor and reputations of Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and General Walter C. Short; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the President of the United States to take necessary steps to posthumously advance Admiral Kimmel and General Short to their highest wartime rank of four-star admiral and lieutenant general. Such action would be appreciated greatly to restore the honor of these two great American servicemen.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 432 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PUERTO RICO

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pass a bill to support self-determination for Puerto Rico.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 433 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INTERMENT OF AN UNKNOWN FROM VIETNAM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we view the Tomb of the Unknown Serviceman of the Vietnam War as a powerful place, symbolic of the sacrifices of all who served in that most divisive war and believe the tomb has come to be recognized and revered by the American people as the place they can come to honor all of America's military heroes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if there are other remains that in all likelihood cannot be identified by known forensic medical techniques, and after all means of identification have been exhausted, the U.S. government make every effort to inter one of our unknown honored dead from the Vietnam War to rest in peace along side his comrades from World War I, World War II and the Korean War in this hallowed ground.

(Approved)

No. 434 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

IMPROVE MILITARY READINESS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and the Congress of the United States to act now to reverse this trend in decreasing defense readiness by providing our military leaders with the resources required to accomplish their missions and the military strategy of the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in order to improve the morale and retention of our high quality, dedicated American service men and women, that the Congress and the Administration take action to stop the erosion of military entitlements and benefits, and restore military retirement benefits to the level that existed prior to 1986. (Approved)

No. 435 (Submitted by Department of Illinois)

ACCOUNTING AND RELEASE OF POW/MIA INFORMATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we urge our United States government to release all knowledge and information about America's POW/MIAs to family members and to the public; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we vigorously pursue all possible avenues to achieve the fullest possible accounting of all American POW/MIAs.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 436 (Submitted by Department of Kansas)

ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL, NAVY, MEDICAL AUGMENTATION TEAM, OPERATION URGENT FURY (GRENADA)

(Disapproved)

No. 437 (Submitted by Department of Louisiana)

NATIONAL SECURITY IS PARAMOUNT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to require mandatory FBI background checks of employees at the Energy Department weapons laboratories; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to implement stronger security measures, and enact legislation necessary to preserve our national security against all foreign nations. (Approved as Amended)

No. 438 (Submitted by Department of New York)

SUPPORT H.R. No. 16

(Disapproved)

No. 439 (Submitted by Department of North Dakota)

AWARD ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL FOR SERVICE IN
KOREA

(Disapproved)

No. 440 (Submitted by Department of Oregon)

APPOINT MRS. ANN BAKKENSEN AS A MEMBER OF THE U.S./RUSSIAN
JOINT COMMISSION

(Disapproved)

No. 441 (Submitted by Department of Pennsylvania)

AWARD ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL FOR
SERVICE IN KOREA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition for an award of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) to U.S. military personnel for service in Korea from July 28, 1954 through September 30, 1966 and from July 1, 1974 to a date to be determined. (Approved as Amended)

No. 442 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)

AUTHORIZATION TO WEAR THE BUNDERWEHR
AND THE LAND BERLIN UNIT CITATIONS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition U.S. Congress to authorize these two awards and the wearing of these two unit citations to U.S. Veterans of Berlin from May 1945 to September 1994.
(Approved as Amended)

No. 443 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)

AMERICANS WHO ARE PRISONERS OF WAR OR MISSING IN ACTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we urge the President of the United States of America and every member of the U.S. Congress to speak out on every occasion to expedite

the return of those U.S. servicemen who are still Prisoners of War or Missing in Action; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we remain focused on our goal of achieving the fullest possible account of missing Americans from our nations past wars.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 444 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)

REQUESTING THE U.S. DEPARATMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM FOR VETERANS EXPOSED TO BIOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL, NEUROLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL, STRESS PRODUCING CONDITIONS WHILE IN MITARY SERVICE

(Referred to Veterans Service Committee)

No. 445 (Submitted by Department of Washington)

POW/MIA FLAG/PENNANT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we urge the government of the United States to strictly enforce the existing public law and require all government agencies to fly the POW/MIA flag on the required occasions as well as everyday the American flag is displayed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage the Secretary General of the United Nations to request that the POW/MIA flag be flown at the UN.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 446 (Submitted by Department of Washington)

URGE CONGRESS TO MODIFY THE VFW CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER TO INCLUDE ALL "COLD WAR" GERMANY VETERANS WITH 30 CONSECUTIVE DAYS OR 60 BROKEN DAYS FROM 5 MAY 1955 THROUGH 2 OCTOBER 1990

(Referred to Finance & Internal Organization Committee)

No. 447 (Submitted by Department of Illinois)

UNITED STATES TROOPS TO WEAR UNITED STATES UNIFORMS AND ANSWER TO AMERICAN OFFICERS IN ALL BRANCHES OF SERVICE

(Disapproved)

No. 448 (Submitted by Department of California)

OPPOSE ANY REQUIREMENT FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES
TO DON EMBLEMS OR INSIGNIA OF, OR SWEAR AN OATH TO, ANY
ORGANIZATION OTHER THAN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

(Disapproved)

No. 449 (Submitted by Department of California)

COMBAT ACTION RIBBON

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and the President of the U.S. to provide for an award of the Navy-Marine Corps Combat Action Ribbon based upon direct participation in ground or surface combat as a member of the Navy or Marine Corps during the period between December 7, 1941, to March 1, 1961. (Approved as Amended)

No. 450 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)

COLD WAR RESOLUTION

(Referred to Finance & Internal Organization Committee)

No. 451 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)

VFW BACK UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT IN AND FULL USE OF
NATO MILITARY POWER AGAINST SERBIA

(Disapproved)

No. 452 (Submitted by Department of Maryland)

ALL ACTS OF TREASON, IN WAR AND PEACE, AGAINST THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA, SHALL BE PUNISHABLE BY DEATH

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that when justified by the nature of the crime, we support capital punishment for those who commit acts of espionage or treason against this nation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support federal laws that allow the courts to sentence those convicted of treason or espionage against the United States in accordance with the nature of the crime. (Approved as Amended)

No. 453 (Submitted by Department of Maryland)

**RETENTION OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE
HEALTH SCIENCES (USUHS) OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD)**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Congress of the United States of America to guarantee continuation of the USUHS in perpetuity. (Approved as Amended)

No. 454 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

**MEMBERSHIP FOR THOSE STATIONED AT GUANTANAMO BAY
NAVAL, CUBA**

(Referred to Finance & Internal Organization Committee)

CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

No. 601 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SEXUAL TRAUMA TREATMENT FOR ALL VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that there will be permanent VA programs established for veterans who need sexual trauma treatment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars insists there be absolutely no limitations or restrictions to VA sexual trauma treatment services thereby making sexual trauma treatment available to all veterans of the Armed Forces regardless of their length of service or reserve status. (Approved)

No. 602 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

**ADEQUATELY FUND THE VETEANS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress in its annual appropriations, to fund the Department of Veterans Affairs construction to allow it to carry out a program of modernization or replacement of aging facilities, which includes a sound system for setting construction priorities, which in combination will ensure the continued provision of quality health care to our nationís veterans. (Approved)

No. 603 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress of the United States to pass a budget and appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs which will fully fund and maintain the integrity of the benefits and entitlements programs and enhance Department of Veterans Affairs health care system. (Approved)

No. 604 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMEND THE UNIFORMED SERVICES FORMER SPOUSES' PROTECTION ACT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW seeks to amend PL 97-252, the Former Spouses' Protection Act, to allow for the termination of court-ordered payments to ex-military spouses upon remarriage; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars seeks legislation that would prohibit forcing a service member from making payments to his former spouse on the date the service member first becomes eligible to receive retired pay if the service member elects to remain in the service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars seeks legislation that ensures any increase in retired pay resulting from increased service or promotion after a divorce is final becomes the sole property of the service member. (Approved)

No. 605 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF RETIREMENT PAY AND VETERANS DISABILITY COMPENSATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge legislation be enacted to permit the concurrent receipt of military retirement pay without reduction of the Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, that we also support legislation that initially limits the disability categories and/or the dollar amount of offset, with the final goal of having all disabled retirees receive full concurrent receipt of all money. (Approved as Amended)

No. 606 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMENDED TAX RETURNS FOR MILITARY RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge Congress to amend current law whereby a military retiree will be allowed to file amended tax returns involving receipt of VA disability compensation beyond the current three (3) year limitation. (Approved)

No. 607 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXCLUDE GUARD AND RESERVE INCOME WHEN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation that standardizes Unemployment Insurance eligibility rules to the extent that Guard and Reserve income will be excluded for purposes of determining eligibility for Unemployment Insurance. (Approved)

No. 608 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VETERANS PROGRAM TO REMAIN A NATIONAL MANDATE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose any such elimination of Federal direction and control over the employment assistance entitlements earned by America's veterans through their honorable service. (Approved as Amended)

No. 609 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFIT PROGRAM (FEHBP) FOR MILITARY RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to enact legislation requiring the Department of Defense to offer military retirees the full range of FEHBP under the same terms as do all other federal departments, agencies and the postal service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, that we also support legislation that initially limits FEHBP to only Medicare eligible retirees with the ultimate goal of allowing all retirees to participate in the program. (Approved)

No. 610 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

THIRD-PARTY REIMBURSEMENT WITHOUT OFFSET

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to retain all third-party reimbursements without offset from its appropriation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we urge that legislation be enacted to make up any Medical Care Cost Recovery (MCCR) shortfall with emergency supplemental appropriations. (Approved as Amended)

No. 611 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ENTITLEMENT TO NURSING HOME CARE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to mandate the provision of nursing home care for all veterans.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 612 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

IMPROVE ACTIVE DUTY BASE PAY

(Referred to National Security & Foreign Affairs Committee)

No. 613 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR RADIATION RELATED DISABILITIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation which provides for a statutory presumption of service connection of the radiation-related disabilities, to include lung cancer, bone cancer, skin cancer, colon cancer, posterior subcapsular cataracts, nonmalignant thyroid nodular disease, ovarian cancer, parathyroid adenoma, tumors of the brain and central nervous system, and rectal cancer. (Approved as Amended)

No. 614 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT AN EFFECTIVE VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support a viable and effective Veterans Employment and

Training Service which has necessary funding and capability to assist veterans in seeking and maintaining meaningful employment and re-employment opportunities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that "VETS" be held accountable in ensuring that veterans receive priority of service in all federally funded job training programs.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 615 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

COMMISSION ON SERVICEMEMBERS AND VETERANS' TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW opposes any legislation to establish a termination date for the Persian Gulf War until there is an end to the current hostilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars is adamantly opposed to "carte blanche" acceptance of all NAPA and VCAC recommendations, as suggested by the Commission on Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Assistance.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 616 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

IMPROVED VA HOSPITAL FACILITIES FOR WOMEN VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to provide funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) specifically for the purpose of improving the quality of hospital facilities and services available to women veterans at VA hospitals.

(Approved)

No. 617 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

FUNDING FEE FOR VA HOME LOANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to repeal the VA Home Loan. (Approved as Amended)

No. 618 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

NECESSARY FUNDING FOR THE LOCAL VETEANS EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES (LVERs) AND DISABLED VETERANS OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS (DVOPs)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress of the United States to appropriate sufficient funds to support the number of LVERs and DVOPs positions as required by Title 38. (Approved)

No. 619 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS TO ALL FEDERALLY
FUNDED JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to enact legislation which will mandate priority of service to all eligible veterans in federally funded job training programs. (Approved as Amended)

No. 620 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VA PROPOSES PERMANENT EXTENSION OF CERTAIN OBRA
PROVISIONS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we are opposed to further extending VA's authority to round-down cost-of-living allowances for disability compensation, and dependency and indemnity compensation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars also opposes any recommendation to extend the VA's authority to limit improved pension payments to \$90 per month to veterans, without dependents, receiving nursing home care covered by Medicaid. (Approved as Amended)

No. 621 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE FOR VA BENEFICIARIES AND
MILITARY RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to provide timely annual increases in an amount at least commensurate with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all Department of Veterans Affairs' beneficiaries and military retirees. (Approved as Amended)

No. 622 (Submitted by Commandeer-in-Chief)

VA MEDICARE SUBVENTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United

States, that we support the swift enactment into law of legislation authorizing VA to collect and retain Medicare dollars. (Approved)

No. 623 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXCLUSIVE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to establish separate appropriations subcommittees exclusive to the Department of Veterans Affairs in both the House and Senate. (Approved)

No. 624 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

FUNDING OF SBA VETERANS PROGRAMS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the strengthening and sufficient funding of an effective veterans entrepreneurship program in the United States Small Business Administration. (Approved)

No. 625 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR GULF WAR VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we continue to urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish an open ended presumptive period until the medical and scientific community determines an appropriate time in which conditions associated with Gulf War service will manifest; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide health care for all active duty military veterans whose health has been adversely affected by the Persian Gulf War, and to conduct all necessary tests to determine the causes of these illnesses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, veterans of the Gulf War be afforded the same rights and privileges guaranteed to all other veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to act in accordance with Title 38 USC, section 1117, and develop, at the earliest possible date, appropriate definitions or diagnoses of the illnesses associated with service in the Persian Gulf; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to adequately fund appropriate medical and scientific research, and the Department of Defense, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Affairs to implement all relevant laws that support all research efforts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Service, and Veterans Affairs and the Congress to fund appropriate research into the causes of these illnesses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW continue to closely monitor this issue and urge appropriate corrective action when necessary to assist Gulf War veterans and their families to include veterans who served in the nations of Turkey and Israel.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 626 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HONOR GUARD FUNCTIONS AT FUNERALS FOR VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to provide active duty and recognize as a federal function Reserve and/or National Guard participation at veterans' funerals, with necessary appropriated funds. (Approved)

No. 627 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

GULF WAR UNDIAGNOSED ILLNESSES

(Disapproved)

No. 628 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RETAIN EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE FOR VETERANS AND DISABLED VETERANS

(Disapproved)

No. 629 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING ALLOWANCE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we seek legislation to amend 38 U.S.C. §2102 to allow a veteran to qualify for a second allowance. (Approved as Amended)

No. 630 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SERVICE CONNECTION FOR HEARING LOSS AND TINNITUS FOR COMBAT VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we urge Congress to enact legislation that will authorize the

Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grant service connection to veterans with documented combat service and who have been diagnosed with hearing loss or tinnitus at any time after discharge from military service.

(Approved)

No. 631 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge a standardized licensure and certification requirement be adopted by the appropriate federal and state agencies in all 50 states; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that recently separated service members be afforded the opportunity to take licensing and certification exams without a period of retraining. (Approved)

No. 632 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PROVIDING EMERGENCY SERVICES TO ENROLLED VETEANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation that mandates the VA to pay for emergency services in non-VA facilities for all enrolled veterans if emergency services are not available within a VA facility. (Approved)

No. 633 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RESEARCH ON THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF DEPLETED URANIUM AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EDUCATION AND SAFETY TRAINING PROGRAM FOR ALL GROUND TROOPS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the Secretary of Defense to immediately direct and verify the full implementation of the Depleted Uranium training program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an independent, non-profit scientific organization, under federal contract from the Department of Veteran Affairs, conduct appropriate studies regarding the health effects of DU, with additional instructions to review and evaluate all other agencies' scientific studies regarding DU, for the purpose of issuing a comprehensive report identifying the possible health effects related to use of DU. (Approved as Amended)

No. 634 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE STAFF REDUCTIONS FOR THE VETEANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to include sufficient funding in VA's appropriations to increase FTEE in the Compensation and Pension Service by 500 and maintain FTEE at the FY 1997 levels in the other VBA components. (Approved)

No. 635 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EQUITY IN VA HEALTH CARE CO-PAYMENTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to require the VA to find a more equitable means to determine a non-service connected veterans outpatient co-payment. (Approved)

No. 636 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMEND INTERNAL REVENUE CODE FOR STATE FINANCIAL VETERANS HOME MORTGAGES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we support legislation to amend the code of 1986 to allow veterans who served after January 1, 1977, in a military operation and who are authorized a military campaign medal, to qualify for the state veterans home mortgage bond program. (Approved as Amended)

No. 637 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT LEGISLATION PROVIDING ADDITIONAL BENEFITS AND SERVICES TO VIETNAM VETERANS CHILDREN WITH SPINA BIFIDA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend the Agent Orange Benefits Act of 1996 to provide Vietnam veterans children with Spina Bifida Cystica with comprehensive health care coverage, attendant services, independent living services, up to 48 months of educational assistance, adaptive housing and transportation assistance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Act be amended to include outreach and service coordination assistance to: (1) ensure that Vietnam veterans children with Spina Bifida and their families are aware of their eligibility for VA benefits and services and, when needed, in fully accessing such benefits; (2) assist such children in protecting Supplemental Security Insurance and other federal and federally-supported benefits and services

from unwarranted reduction or termination due to the receipt of assistance under the Act; and (3) assist such children in accessing other specialized human services for persons with severe disabilities offered by federal, state, and local government agencies and other human services organizations. (Approved)

No. 638 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS STRATEGIC PLAN

(Disapproved)

No. 639 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VA DEMONSTRATION PROJECT FOR ALZHEIMER'S FACILITY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the need for Alzheimer's programs throughout the Department of Veterans Affairs and the State Veterans Homes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this demonstration project be uniquely designed programs for veterans with Alzheimer's disease using other than the routine medical or psychiatric care models. The project should include Alzheimer's research as an integral part of the veterans treatment program. (Approved as Amended)

No. 640 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VA TO PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE OF CARING FOR VETERANS RESIDING IN STATE VETERANS HOMES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we support a VA per diem payment that equals 33.33% of the national average cost of providing care in a state veterans home; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Congress of the United States to fully fund the State Veterans Home Construction Grant Program. (Approved)

No. 641 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RESTORE GRANT IN AID HOSPITAL PROGRAM TO THE FILIPINO WORLD WAR II VETERANS IN THE PHILIPPINES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, to restore the Grant-In-Aid Hospital Program under the management of the Manila Regional

Office to assist in the medical treatment of surviving Philippine-based WWII veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all inequities proportioned at the time of the original suspension be evaluated so as to bring the Philippine Veterans Memorial Medical Hospital in line with U.S. hospital standards and procedures. (Approved as Amended)

No. 642 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SERVICE CONNECTION FOR CHRONIC PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY
AND DIABETES AS A RESULT OF EXPOSURE TO AGENT ORANGE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to expeditiously include Chronic Peripheral Neuropathy and Diabetes as presumption for service connection as a result of exposure to Agent Orange.
(Approved as Amended)

No. 643 (Submitted by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief and
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief)

HOLD THE ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS ACCOUNTABLE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call on this Administration and Congress to make veterans a priority with not only words, but with proper funding that will allow veterans access to quality health care in a timely manner; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW Commander-in-Chief take whatever measures he may deem necessary with the Administration, the Congress
(Approved)

No. 644 (Submitted by Department of District of Columbia)

PROVIDE FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP OF THE CEMETERY
AT FORMER CLARK AIR BASE IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

(Disapproved)

No. 645 (Submitted by Department of District of Columbia)

BENEFITS FOR FILIPINO VETERANS AND SCOUTS WHO SERVED WITH
THE U.S. ARMED FORCES DURING WWII

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United

States, that we support legislation to recognize veterans of the organized military forces of the government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, while such forces were in the service of the armed forces of the United States during WWII, as having been active service for purposes of equal benefits under programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support additional legislation that directs the Secretary of the Army to issue a certificate of service to every national of the Philippine Islands deemed by the Secretary to have performed any military service in aid of the armed forces of the United States during WWII. (Approved as Amended)

No. 646 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

THE FUTURE OF PERSHING HALL

(Disapproved)

No. 647 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

GUARANTEED U.S. ARMED FORCES MEDICAL SUPPORT FOR RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Congress of the United States of America to enact legislation requiring the Department of Defense to ensure that retirees of the U.S. armed forces and their eligible family members and dependents, receive guaranteed medical support by requiring each branch of the armed forces' health services organization to provide the needed medical support as a secondary mission to providing medical support for the active duty population. (Approved)

No. 648 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES STANDARDIZATION

(Disapproved)

No. 649 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

POSTAL PRIVILEGES FOR RETIREES

(Disapproved)

No. 650 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

TIMELY SURVIVORS' BENEFIT PROGRAM ENTITLEMENT
PAYMENT TO SURVIVORS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation requiring the Department of Defense to ensure that each branch of the armed forces servicing finance center release the initial survivor's entitlement check immediately upon receipt of the SBP claim. (Approved)

No. 651 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

POST EXCHANGE AND COMMISSARY PRIVILEGES FOR U.S. MILITARY
RETIREES RESIDING OR TRAVELING OVERSEAS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Department of State and the Department of Defense to ensure the protection of exchange and commissary benefits for retirees of the U.S. armed forces in all future treaty negotiations, renegotiations, amendments, or adjustment of any nature. (Approved as Amended)

No. 652 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT PREFERENCE WITH
THE U.S. GOVERNMENT OVERSEAS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of State and the Department of Defense to ensure the protection of veterans' employment benefits in all future treaty negotiations, renegotiations, amendments, or adjustments of any nature. (Approved as Amended)

No. 653 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

ESTABLISH A VA ASSISTANCE OFFICE IN THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation authorizing the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish an assistance office in Germany to support U.S. citizens in Europe. (Approved as Amended)

No. 654 (Submitted by Departments of, Florida, Louisiana and Texas)

CHANGE RULE REGARDING VA INTEREST RATE REDUCTION
REFINANCING LOAN PROGRAM

(Disapproved)

No. 655 (Submitted by Department of Florida)

MANDATORY VA HEALTH CARE INCLUDING VA CLINIC PHARMACIES
FOR MILITARY RETIREES AND THEIR DEPENDENTS

(Disapproved)

No. 656 (Submitted by Department of Florida)

"NOTCH BABIES"

(Disapproved)

No. 657 (Submitted by Department of Illinois)

LONG TERM CARE FOR VETERANS AT ILLINOIS
NURSING CARE FACILITIES

(Disapproved)

No. 658 (Submitted by Department of Illinois)

"EQUALIZE SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS-FIX THE NOTCH"

(Disapproved)

No. 659 (Submitted by Department of Illinois)

ADEQUATE FUNDING BY VA MEDICAL CENTERS FOR ALL U.S.
VETERANS

(Disapproved)

No. 660 (Submitted by Department of Kentucky)

MILL SPRINGS NATIONAL CEMETERY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that sufficient lands be acquired and set aside for expansion of our

national cemeteries into the millennia; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that suitable land be acquired, adjacent to Mill Springs National Cemetery, for a museum dedicated to the Battle of Mill Springs, which was causative to the establishment of said cemetery; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that commercialization of the immediate environs of Mill Springs National Cemetery, and all national cemeteries, and the prospective museum, be restrained and discouraged. (Approved as Amended)

No. 661 (Submitted by Department of Kentucky)

EQUITABLE RETIREMENT SYSTEM FOR ALL VETERANS EMPLOYED BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

(Disapproved)

No. 662 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)

DISABILITY PAY TO RETIRED MILITARY PERSONNEL

(Disapproved)

No. 663 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to repeal Title 38, United States Code, section 5503 (b)(1)(A), because the law has currently "outlived" its intended purpose and now actually discriminates against a group of veterans who cannot speak for themselves. (Approved as Amended)

No. 664 (Submitted by Department of Montana)

INCREASE FUNDING FOR BURIALS AT STATE CEMETERIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we urge Congress to provide funding for grave space, markers, interment, and grave liner for burial of veterans and spouses in both VA national cemeteries and in state veterans' cemeteries. (Approved as Amended)

No. 665 (Submitted by Department of Nebraska)

GRAND ISLAND VETERANS HOME CONSTRUCTION

(Disapproved)

No. 666 (Submitted by Department of Nebraska)

SCOTTSBLUFF VETERANS HOME CONSTRUCTION

(Disapproved)

No. 667 (Submitted by Department of New Jersey)

VETERAN'S PREFERENCE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose all attempts to reduce or circumvent veterans' preference.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 668 (Submitted by Department of New York)

TOGO WEST JR., SECRETARY OF VA, MUST GO NOW!

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, it is our duty and obligation to every man and woman who ever served in uniform in the armed forces of our nation to petition our Commander-in-Chief Thomas Pouliot to once again lead a movement to remove Secretary of Veterans Affairs Togo West Jr. from office and get rid of him just as we did Derwinski; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge that only a qualified person be approved to serve in this cabinet position. (Approved)

No. 669 (Submitted by Department of New York)

THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S \$10,000.00 TERM LIFE INSURANCE
POLICY BE ADJUSTED AS FOLLOWS

(Disapproved)

No. 670 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

VETERANS PREFERENCE, VETERANS PRIORITY OF SERVICE AND
OTHER SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
PROGRAMS

(Disapproved)

No. 671 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

(Disapproved)

No. 672 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that veterans priority of service be provided by any agency or organization, state or federal, that receives federal funding for employment and training; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that at least one veterans advocate be placed on the state and local Workforce Investment Act (WIA) boards; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all states who are involved in the Workforce Investment Act transition establish a partnership with the Federal Agencies requiring those agencies participation in providing technical assistance based on Federal mandated services in the planning of the transition to ensure that each state shall include all of those services, priorities, preferences, and other special consideration required by law.
(Approved as Amended)

No. 673 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

EMPLOYEE PROTECTION AGAINST DISCHARGE FOR SEEKING
TREATMENT FROM THE VA

(Disapproved)

No. 674 (Submitted by Department of Oregon)

CLARK AIR BASE

(Disapproved)

No. 675 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)

PROVIDE FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP OF THE CEMETERY
AT THE FORMER CLARK AIR BASE IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE
PHILIPPINES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the United States government, by legislative or administrative action, to seek a long term solution to the neglect of the former Clark Air Base Cemetery.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 676 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)

**BENEFITS FOR SAIPAN MARINE SCOUTS WHO FOUGHT ALONG SIDE
THE U.S. FORCES DURING WORK WAR II BATTLE OF SAIPAN**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to recognize the Saipan Marine Scouts who served along side of U.S. forces during the Battle of Saipan, as having been active service for purposes of equal benefits under programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support additional legislation that directs the Secretary of Defense to issue a certificate of service to every Saipan Marine Scout deemed by the Secretary to have performed military service in aid of the armed forces of the U.S. during the WWII Battle of Saipan. (Approved)

No. 677 (Submitted by Department of South Dakota)

**INCREASE THE BUDGET OF THE VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND
TRAINING SERVICE**

(Disapproved)

No. 678 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)

**TO SUPPORT COOPERATION BETWEEN THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
LABOR AND THE VIRGINIA EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION**

(Disapproved)

No. 679 (Submitted by Department of California)

**SUPPORT S.381/H.R. 631, BENEFITS FOR FILIPINO AMERICAN
VETERANS OF WWII**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we go on record in support of Supplemental Social Security benefits for Filipino American veterans of WWII. (Approved as Amended)

No. 680 (Submitted by Department of California)

**SUPPORT H.R. 1182, THE "SERVICEMEMBERS EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 1999"**

(Disapproved)

No. 681 (Submitted by Department of California)

REMOVE RESTRICTIONS ON PARTICIPATION BY MEDICARE-ELIGIBLE
DoD BENEFICIARIES UNDER THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH
BENEFITS PROGRAM (FEHBP)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the removal of restrictions on Medicare eligible DoD beneficiaries under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. (Approved as Amended)

No. 682 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT H.R. 1215, "VETERANS AMERICAN DREAM HOME
OWNERSHIP ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1999"

(Disapproved)

No. 683 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT H.R. 648,
"MILITARY RETIRED PAY RESTORATION ACT OF 1999"

(Disapproved)

No. 684 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT H.R. 303, PERMIT RETIRED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED
FORCES TO RECEIVE COMPENSATION FROM THE VA CONCURRENTLY
WITH RETIRED PAY
WITHOUT DEDUCTION FROM EITHER

(Disapproved)

No. 685 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT H.R. 500, "THE MILITARY PAY AND RETIREMENT REFORM
ACT OF 1999"

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to restore military retirement benefits that were reduced by the Military Retirement Reform Act of 1986. (Approved as Amended)

No. 686 (Submitted by Department of California)

ENACT LEGISLATION ALLOWING VETERANS WITH 50% OR GREATER
DISABILITY THE RIGHT TO THE SAME PRIVILEGES ALLOWED TO
VETERANS WITH 100% DISABILITY

(Disapproved)

No. 687 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT S.350, "MILITARY HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF
1999"

(Disapproved)

No. 688 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT H.R. 135, "VETERANS' ACCESS TO EMERGENCY CARE ACT
OF 1999"

(Disapproved)

No. 689 (Submitted by Department of California)

PRESERVATION OF THE NATIONAL SOLDIERS' HOME LOCATED AT
THE VA MEDICAL CENTER, WEST LOS ANGELES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the United States Congress to ensure adherence to the expressed wishes of the donors of said land, that the terms and consideration of the grant be adhered to, that the Pacific Branch of the National Soldiers' Home for Disabled Veterans be maintained on said property, that an opportunity be offered to those who were displaced from said National Soldiers' Home to return thereto, and that the admission requirements for entering the Home revert back to the original status.
(Approved)

No. 690 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT H.R. 1594, FILIPINO VETERANS' BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT
ACT OF 1999

(Disapproved)

No. 691 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)

USE TOBACCO SETTLEMENT FUNDS

FOR VETERANS HEALTH CARE NEEDS

(Disapproved)

No. 692 (Submitted by Department of Maryland)

ANALYSIS OF GULF WAR SYNDROM (GWS) BY THE UNIFORMED
SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES (USUHS)

(Disapproved)

No. 693 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)

DESIGNATE CERTAIN MILITARY BASES AS
NATIONAL CEMETERIES FOR AERIAL BURIALS

(Disapproved)

No. 694 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OFFICE OF VETERANS' WIDOWS/SURVIVING
SPOUSES AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the establishment of an office of veteransí widows and surviving spousesí affairs in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
(Approved)

No. 695 (Submitted by Department of California)

REQUEST THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO
COMPLY WITH THE MILITARY AND
VETERANS CODE TO PROTECT VETERANS

(Disapproved)

No. 696 (Submitted by Department of California)

FIELD SERVICE OFFICERS PART-TIME PAID EMPLOYEES

(Disapproved)

No. 697 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

THE USE OF THE "BATTLEFIELD CROSS" IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Department of Veterans Affairs, National Cemetery Administration, to amend their policy regarding the use of weapons of war to exclude the "Battlefield Cross" from this definition and allow its use in a proper and dignified manner as a memorial on the grounds of a national cemetery under their control. (Approved)

No. 698 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS (LOU GEHRIG'S DISEASE)
HIGH AMONG GULF WAR VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call for intensified medical and scientific research to determine the cause of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis among Gulf War Veterans, and in the interim, we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs grant an open-ended presumption of service connection for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis for Persian Gulf War veterans until such time as the research is complete. (Approved)

No. 699 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ESTABLISHING A PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR
VETERANS SUFFERING FROM HEPATITIS "C"

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to authorize an open-ended presumption of service connection for veterans with Hepatitis C as a result of their military service.
(Approved)

No. 700 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXPANSION OF ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pass necessary legislation to have the Navy Annex property incorporated into Arlington National Cemetery; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we strongly support legislation to establish a National Military Museum in some other yet to be determined geographic area, rather than the Navy Annex site. (Approved)

No. 701 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SOLVENCY FOR THE ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOMES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to support competitive bidding on an undeveloped 49 acre parcel of land at the United States Soldiersí and Airmenís Home after a professionally approved appraisal is accepted by the AFRHB; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in conjunction with the above appraisal process, Congress ensure all active duty enlisted and warrant officers be required to contribute \$1.00 per month from their pay to the AFRHB. Together, these actions will ensure solvency beyond 2004 for the AFRHB. (Approved)

No. 702 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

A GI BILL FOR THE 21st CENTURY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact a new GI Bill for the 21st Century which would provide an educational benefit that covers the cost of tuition, fees, books and related expenses along with a stipend to cover housing expenses. (Approved)

No. 703 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HOMELESS VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to fully fund all Veteransí Homeless programs that are administered at the Federal level; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VFW Posts be encouraged to join community-based organizations in addressing veterans homelessness. (Approved)

No. 704 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REQUESTING THE U.S.DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM FOR VETERANS EXPOSED TO BIOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL, NEUROLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL, STRESS PRODUCING CONDITIONS WHILE IN MILITARY SERVICE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we respectfully request the Honorable Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a comprehensive program to monitor and examine regularly all veterans who show symptoms of diseases they did not have prior to their military service. This program should include: Examination, Diagnosis and Treatment for exposure to all agents of warfare whether in use, training, handling, study, research or in some cases simple observation of a

detonation or blast. Again, there may also be cases where the simple study and research of materials by using services was the purpose of an Exercise.
(Approved)

NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL

Chairman: John J. Stang, Past Commander-in-Chief, Kansas

Vice Chairman: George K. Mead, Post 9400, Arizona

(Room 1204 AB, H. Roe Bartle Convention Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alaska	Leander P. Carr	.9978
Arizona	Lyman F. Chapman	.1760
Arizona	Donald E. Maynard	.7968
Arizona	George K. Mead	.9400
Arizona	Vincent J. Mitchell	.9972
Arkansas	A M. Armstrong	.2283
California	Robert G. Houchins	.1123
California	Everett R. Martin	.1732
California	Craig W. Morgan	.10040
California	Arthur A. Napiwocki	.1614
California	Peter J. Szabo	.3928
Colorado	Terrance D. Jacobson	.3471
Colorado	James E. Mauck	.2601
Connecticut	Edward L. Burnham	.1724
Connecticut	Ronald Christopher	.5095
Connecticut	Thomas C. Deere	.6726
Connecticut	Dominic J. Romano	.7330
Delaware	Paul R. Phillips, Jr.	.2863
Dist. of Col.	Kenneth J. Allen, Jr.	.341
Dist. of Col.	A Leo Anderson	.284
Dist. of Col.	Gerard P. Miserandino, Sr.	.2979
Dist. of Col.	David F. Wood	.1085
Europe	Jarold K. Stottlemire	.10810
Florida	Raymond D. Brennan, Jr.	.10131
Florida	John M. Carney	.4643
Florida	Richard Fitzgerald	.7721
Florida	Robert M. Sprute	.5625
Florida	James E. Talbert	.8093

Georgia	Dick D. Dickens	.6605
Hawaii	Donald Ortogero	.10276
Idaho	William E. Rhoads	.9831
Illinois	Eugene J. Karban	.7980
Illinois	Tom Morgan	.1592
Illinois	Terry W. Vance	.9789
Indiana	John L. Barnes	.7119
Indiana	Omar F. Kendall	.673
Indiana	David Lantz	.1130
Iowa	Clinton L. Hoferman	.6172
Iowa	Robert S. Randall	.839
Iowa	William P. Shannon	.733
Kansas	Robert B. Greene	.846
Kansas	Randal G. Grimsley	.56
Kansas	Clyde H. Hatcher	.1254
Kansas	John J. Stang	.3147
Kentucky	John T. Brame, Jr.	.1913
Kentucky	Norman Miller	.7698
Latin Amer/Carib	Casey R. Morris, Jr.	.3835
Louisiana	James E. Westbrook	.3784
Maine	Jerry A. Elwell	.8395
Maine	Donald R. Libby, Jr.	.832
Maryland	William E. Berry	.6694
Maryland	Thomas E. Ryan	.10080
Maryland	James L. Youngblood	.6694
Massachusetts	William L. Mc Carthy	.864
Michigan	Robert E. Faidley	.6132
Michigan	Eric L. Halvorsen	.5065
Michigan	Lawrence Le Febvre	.552
Michigan	Richard L. Lehner	.1735
Minnesota	Calvin D. Ferber	.612
Minnesota	Lester G. Orton	.363
Minnesota	James D. Vetter	.3289
Mississippi	Arthur D. Grimes	.4057
Mississippi	Johnnie Sartor	.5573
Missouri	Carl E. Arnold	.6477
Missouri	Louis W. Denny	.2590
Missouri	Lawrence M. Maher	.7356
Montana	James J. Bertrand	.1579
Montana	Dan G. Norton	.1125
Nebraska	Vern E. Hoffart	.131
Nebraska	John R. Liebsack	.2503
Nevada	Douglas R. Creel	.6826
New Hampshire	Frank E. Casey, Jr.	.816
New Jersey	George J. Lisicki	.2314
New Jersey	Harry G. Rossi	.809

New Jersey	John J. Senk, Jr.	335
New Jersey	Vincent J. Tamburino	2319
New Jersey	Howard Vander Clute	6467
New York	Albert A. Alteri	9591
New York	Thomas E. Cooper	5344
New York	Arthur E. Koch, III.	6780
New York	Harry C. Wurth	5253
North Carolina	William C. Cox	7383
North Carolina	Elree T. Smith	10999
North Dakota	Wayne L. Paulson	753
North Dakota	Robert G. Rudd	7564
Ohio	James Comedy	3383
Ohio	Keith E. Harman	3035
Ohio	William W. Hawk	9381
Ohio	Terry A. Roan	3124
Oklahoma	Earl W. Sass	10099
Oregon	Doyle E. Souders	2807
Pacific Areas	Kenneth W. Schaefer	2485
Pennsylvania	Charles R. Feltenberger	2435
Pennsylvania	Allen Q. Jones	21
Pennsylvania	George W. Mullen	4480
Pennsylvania	Frank J. Zenzer	676
Rhode Island	Ernest R. Frappier	6342
South Carolina	Clyde M. Lindsay, Jr.	5932
South Carolina	John D. Patty	2889
South Dakota	William F. Cerny, Jr.	9950
South Dakota	Charles A. Kappelman, Jr.	4674
South Dakota	William J. Radigan	3061
Tennessee	Joe A. Murphy, Jr.	1289
Texas	Charles L. Cannon, Jr.	5076
Texas	Glen M. Gardner, Jr.	3359
Texas	Anthony W. Graf	1815
Texas	R. Earl Lord	10351
Texas	Mary A. Marsh	8315
Texas	William B. Moody	2034
Utah	Sanford Rosenthal	3586
Vermont	James S. Forest	782
Virginia	Kenneth J. Vitale	2163
Virginia	Bobby R. Walls	2216
Washington	Roger S. Brazier	11329
Washington	Gary W. Hulsey	1949
West Virginia	Richard W. Homan	9666
West Virginia	Norf F. Nelson	1212
Wisconsin	Clifford C. Borden, Jr.	8483
Wisconsin	Bernard J. Boyle	2823
Wisconsin	J R. Weber	2260

Wyoming	Charles E. Fresorger	579
---------------	----------------------------	-----

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

Chairman: John W. Mahan, Past Commander-in-Chief, Montana

Vice Chairman: Michael R. Jugan, Post 8180, Pennsylvania

(Room 1202 AB, H. Roe Bartle Convention Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Roland L. Day	.668
Alabama	Oliver W. Dial	.924
Alabama	George A. Ganey	.5660
Alabama	Charles R. Stephens	.3128
Alaska	Robert S. Green	.1685
Alaska	Michael D. Higdon	.10029
Arizona	George W. Robinson	.9400
Arizona	Ronald L. Slater	.9829
Arizona	Billie E. Stuart	.549
Arkansas	James F. Gilbert	.4548
Arkansas	Leslie F. Thone	.3141
California	Dianne H. Brogdon	.5179
California	Alexander W. Brown, III.	.6874
California	Robert W. Drew	.85
California	James R. Rowoldt	.10040
California	Vernon L. Shahbazian	.1999
California	Kenneth L. Stevens	.9223
California	Elbert E. Vaughn	.10125
California	Anthony A. Whatley	.5991
Colorado	Darrell D. Elliott	.1771
Colorado	John R. Lewis	.4051
Connecticut	Edward S. Banas	.10004
Connecticut	Howard C. Harris	.9460
Connecticut	Donald H. Schwab	.7827
Connecticut	Robert A. Stevens	.10690
Delaware	Robert A. Mc Gowan	.3257
Dist. of Col.	Lynn R. Hill	.7284
Dist. of Col.	George A. Lange, Jr.	.284
Europe	Harold Hedges	.9334
Europe	Norman J. Hirschman	.10658
Florida	John R. Crane	.4407
Florida	Donald L. Pierce	.8696
Florida	Robert Shepherd	.4864
Georgia	James R. Coggins	.5080
Georgia	Frederick Engelhardt, III.	.2518
Georgia	Edward P. Grealish, Jr.	.3200

Georgia	William J. Wilson	7007
Hawaii	Edward K. Bailey	10276
Idaho	Louis K. Nave	9425
Illinois	Joseph L. Berg	5691
Illinois	Rick Frank	1461
Illinois	Vincent R. Long	1756
Illinois	Donald R. Smithenry	5520
Indiana	David G. Havely	5864
Indiana	Richard L. Jordan	2067
Indiana	Ronald E. Martin	7119
Indiana	James J. Thiel	717
Indiana	Donald R. Westbury	9323
Iowa	Leonard F. Kroupa	788
Iowa	Roger D. Schwieso	941
Iowa	Patrick J. Shanahan	788
Kansas	Ronald G. Browning	846
Kansas	Leland W. Kindler	6882
Kansas	Harry D. Nelson	1186
Kansas	Howard F. Perue	4175
Kansas	Daniel M. Shea	7397
Kentucky	Leroy Ford	5480
Kentucky	Michael G. Penney	1191
Kentucky	Jeff A. Phillips	1170
Latin Amer/Carib	Dannie Cooper	3822
Louisiana	Carroll J. Knott	5153
Maine	Donald W. Linscott, Jr.	1603
Maine	Robert E. Phillips	1761
Maine	Arthur J. Roy	1603
Maryland	Robert L. Miedzinski	2632
Massachusetts	Gardner Mc Williams	2425
Michigan	Edmund R. Gucwa	6896
Michigan	Ernest E. Meyers	4090
Michigan	Douglas D. Paulson	5602
Michigan	Elmer J. Wurster	7546
Minnesota	Patrick T. Bohmer	246
Minnesota	Robert E. Hansen	295
Minnesota	Orlin D. Jackson	1720
Minnesota	William J. Manor	3871
Minnesota	Larry G. Ziebarth	6843
Mississippi	Frank L. Bass	1243
Mississippi	Travis R. Harlow	5395
Mississippi	William H. Long	6473
Missouri	Charles A. Brewster	5553
Missouri	George C. Graner	10967
Missouri	Lawrence M. Maher	7356
Missouri	William E. Rafiner	7900

Montana	John W. Mahan	1116
Montana	Erich J. Maki	4198
Montana	Robert C. Smith	3177
Nebraska	John R. Gollihare	1504
Nebraska	Earl Stiner, Jr.	3421
Nevada	Stephen P. Gibbs	1753
Nevada	Herbert Tellkamp, Jr.	2313
New Hampshire	Kevin P. Mc Keating, Jr.	483
New Hampshire	Virgil N. Mullins	2616
New Hampshire	Richard A. Robinson	816
New Hampshire	Robert T. St Onge	8214
New Jersey	Otto A. Gollon	7679
New Jersey	Donald E. Marshall, Jr.	9503
New Jersey	Joseph G. Retkovis	5579
New Mexico	James H. Ferguson	7686
New Mexico	William F. Festing, Jr.	3277
New Mexico	Lawrence R. Frappier	3015
New Mexico	Joe D. Salas	401
New Mexico	William D. Wilson	7686
New York	Joseph D. Brooks	358
New York	James H. Dersherl	5538
New York	Douglas D. Eysaman	374
New York	Elton C. Klein	478
New York	Jack I. Simons	9217
North Carolina	Don N. Hancock	5631
North Carolina	Glenn P. Milliman	2401
North Carolina	Ashley V. Raper	2057
North Carolina	Betty H. Rowland	9100
Ohio	Lowell G. Brewer	3809
Ohio	Robert W. Crow	4027
Ohio	Joseph J. Ferencie	1863
Ohio	John R. Johnson	8850
Ohio	Thomas L. Kissell	9648
Ohio	Roger D. Taylor	2873
Oklahoma	John W. Davidson	9969
Oklahoma	Charles R. Horne	9969
Oregon	Harold C. Jordan	293
Oregon	Daniel W. Wakefield	81
Oregon	Edwin L. Williams	10644
Pacific Areas	Charles A. Clay	1509
Pacific Areas	Thomas I. Elliott	9467
Pacific Areas	Michael R. Jugan	8180
Pacific Areas	Donald O. Webster	9957
Pennsylvania	Howard L. Adler, Jr.	456
Pennsylvania	Thomas J. Dougherty	3474
Pennsylvania	John B. Getz, Jr.	6759

Pennsylvania	..Allan C. Jameson	..928
Pennsylvania	..George Sarver, Jr.	..402
Pennsylvania	..Joseph T. Tragis	..6082
Rhode Island	..Jean P. Arcand	..2686
South Carolina	..Bobby K. Bryant	..9539
South Carolina	..Johnnie C. Robinson	..2889
South Dakota	..Gary Knudson	..2038
South Dakota	..William J. Radigan	..3061
South Dakota	..William L. Russell	..750
Tennessee	..Charles Bearden, Jr.	..1289
Tennessee	..Wilburn Hastings, Jr.	..5019
Tennessee	..Roy C. Womble	..5019
Texas	..Harry J. Bergenheier	..8878
Texas	..Rolland R. Frink	..9299
Texas	..Donald L. Harwood	..6794
Texas	..James E. Nier	..8919
Texas	..George B. Sparkman	..9181
Texas	..Clifford T. Teer	..2148
Utah	..Harry B. Miller	..3586
Vermont	..Merritt A. Edwards	..6689
Vermont	..Frank A. Hickory	..792
Virginia	..James L. Booth	..2216
Virginia	..Marshall E. Guy	..4667
Virginia	..Robert J. Klausung	..609
Washington	..Richard A. Petersen	..10018
Washington	..Thomas M. Schuster	..969
Washington	..Blaine E. Teachman	..9301
West Virginia	..Robert W. Caruthers	..9926
West Virginia	..Ralph Stump	..2716
Wisconsin	..Earl D. Banks	..9403
Wisconsin	..Milo L. Cunningham	..1318
Wisconsin	..John A. Miller	..9537
Wisconsin	..Kenneth D. Munro	..2534

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

Chairman: Raymond R. Soden, Past Commander-in-Chief, Illinois

Vice Chairman: Dale Bond, Post 4813, Montana

Vice Chiarmen: Marcus S. Butler, Post 10252, Arkansas

Vice Chairman: Arthur J. Fellwock, Past Commander-in-Chief, Indiana

(Room 2201, H. Roe Bartle Convention Center)

Department	..Name	..Post No.
Alabama	..Ronnie D. Doege	..5658

Alabama	Jack F. Ivy	2702
Alabama	Travis W. Ledbetter	3016
Alaska	Marcus S. Butler	10252
Alaska	Harvey A. Johnson	9569
Alaska	Calvin E. Pope	9365
Arizona	William F. Chagnon	5990
Arizona	Thomas Collins	549
Arizona	Dennis E. Kane	3632
Arkansas	Joel P. Cockrill	5225
Arkansas	William W. Hatch	10021
Arkansas	Ron L. Helton	9095
California	Benjamin Berroteran	4696
California	Robert A. Crider	1744
California	Virgil L. Griffin	3795
California	Robert J. Maxwell	1932
California	Deboise Mitchell	5179
California	Pete Sozzoni	1900
Colorado	Vincent L. Neuroth	9644
Colorado	Everitt W. Simpson	4171
Colorado	Kenny R. Vegoren	3917
Connecticut	Ronald Rusakiewicz	9460
Connecticut	Dale St Louis	574
Delaware	F Alfred Fleischut	3420
Delaware	Charles E. Price	3792
Dist. of Col.	John P. Breen	2979
Dist. of Col.	William W. Jones	341
Europe	John C. Neilson	2566
Europe	Everett W. Young	10692
Florida	Robert P. Loftus	4643
Florida	Samuel D. Sweetman	5405
Florida	Alan A. Wallace	10068
Georgia	Ray E. Brooks	2785
Georgia	Ray L. Christie	5080
Georgia	Billy W. Smith	4904
Hawaii	Thomas Ortogero, Sr.	10276
Idaho	Wayne D. Lanier	2146
Idaho	Donald G. Riegel	889
Illinois	Clyde F. Davis	1604
Illinois	Donald Hartenberger	3553
Illinois	Maurice H. Kerckhove	2153
Illinois	George R. Lobb	3579
Illinois	Terry L. Mc Kinney	886
Illinois	Thomas W. Neville	2327
Illinois	Joseph D. Ross	2048
Illinois	Raymond R. Soden	2149
Indiana	Harley D. Andrews	6606

Indiana	Arthur J. Fellwock	1114
Indiana	William N. Hedge	5782
Indiana	George A. Magurany	802
Indiana	William A. Thien	3281
Indiana	James D. Voelker	1114
Iowa	Merle L. Duffy	839
Iowa	Donald L. Gilbert	733
Kansas	Lewie B. Cooper	1174
Kansas	Russell R. Cutright	1650
Kansas	Elmer E. Friesen	971
Kansas	Herbert G. Schwartzkopf	7972
Kansas	W Richard Sobek	3712
Kentucky	William J. Apple	1170
Kentucky	Richard M. Young	1484
Latin Amer/Carib	Dalton R. Johnson	3822
Latin Amer/Carib	Ruth D. Thomas	3835
Louisiana	Euclid A. Hernandez	5097
Louisiana	Hausey E. Wilson	6640
Maine	Paul S. Colburn	1761
Maine	Philip M. Farrell	11299
Maine	Thaxter S. Sedgwick	2499
Maryland	Raymond J. Boyle	6027
Maryland	Thomas V. Kimball, Jr.	10159
Maryland	Kenneth R. Ransdell	9619
Massachusetts	George J. Barrett	2017
Massachusetts	Gordon L. Crosby	1526
Massachusetts	Michael J. Gormalley	2016
Massachusetts	Michael J. Imbracsio	639
Massachusetts	William J. Madera	1702
Massachusetts	Anthony B. Piscopo	529
Michigan	John L. Gorte, Jr.	9455
Michigan	Gary A. Housknecht	3243
Michigan	Arnold E. Huuki	6507
Michigan	Cecil A. Mc Goon	2780
Michigan	Donald Mrdjenovic	7573
Minnesota	Daniel Bartholomew	3144
Minnesota	Dean E. Means	1642
Minnesota	John S. Staum	9625
Minnesota	Frank J. Volk	2717
Minnesota	Richard A. Zierdt	6587
Mississippi	Garvin L. Bain	3962
Mississippi	J Hollis Smith	480
Missouri	Jim D. Baker	3174
Missouri	Michael D. Green	6137
Missouri	Lawrence M. Maher	7356
Missouri	John B. Spitler	2866

Montana	Dale Bond	4813
Montana	Francis E. Croucher	1125
Montana	Leslie E. Eskildsen	4067
Montana	Richard L. Ott	1087
Montana	Lawrence R. Troud	4099
Nebraska	Rolland E. Hild	8334
Nebraska	Gary C. Steckelberg	7419
Nebraska	Richard E. White	131
Nevada	Frank A. Hoke	3726
Nevada	Bernard J. Juran, III.	3819
Nevada	Odis Ward	10047
New Hampshire	Michael S. Annis	2860
New Hampshire	William J. Egan	8214
New Hampshire	John M. Lilly	1698
New Jersey	Andrew Henkel, Jr.	2290
New Jersey	Richard W. Holliday	7508
New Jersey	Pierre Lamereaux	2314
New Jersey	Jackie J. Shiverdaker	7677
New Jersey	Frank Thomas	1851
New Mexico	Tyrone M. Benson	7686
New Mexico	Seturnino Garduno	3280
New York	T William Bossidy	7466
New York	Ralph U. De Marco	885
New York	Melvin Garrett	6396
New York	Clyde A. Lewis	125
New York	Vincent J. Siesta	546
New York	Robert C. Stinger, Jr.	6530
New York	Richard L. Welch	2752
North Carolina	Hilton L. Deese	2843
North Carolina	William C. Dohl	4309
North Carolina	Paul G. Yeager	7315
North Dakota	Louis L. Chase	7564
North Dakota	Harvey A. Peterson	2764
North Dakota	Gordon R. Thorson	7564
Ohio	George P. Durinka	1974
Ohio	John M. Griffin	6772
Ohio	Curtis M. Jewell	1090
Ohio	Leon Johnson	6772
Ohio	William A. Melott	66
Ohio	Carl K. Price	4931
Ohio	John Wasyluk	2529
Oklahoma	Darrell R. Mc Gee	5263
Oklahoma	Argle R. Moore, Sr.	1320
Oklahoma	Theron Price, Jr.	4574
Oregon	Raymond K. Buhrmaster	2807
Pacific Areas	Gerald L. Kraus	3457

Pennsylvania	John A. Brenner	2493
Pennsylvania	Glenn C. Dashner	464
Pennsylvania	Neale H. Deibler	6493
Pennsylvania	John M. Gunn, Sr.	2506
Pennsylvania	Paul J. Kopp	8896
Pennsylvania	Joseph M. Salvo	5267
Pennsylvania	Andrew J. Sarnak	283
Pennsylvania	Albert S. Thomas, Jr.	974
Pennsylvania	Ronald G. Tyler, Sr.	1462
Rhode Island	Raymond J. Ducharme	11519
Rhode Island	John Sivo	2396
South Carolina	Lyn D. Dimery	10420
South Carolina	William E. Pruitt	9509
South Dakota	Gilbert L. Frentz	750
South Dakota	Walter F. Joynt	1273
South Dakota	Roy E. Schramm	3351
South Dakota	Tom Sherman	3342
Tennessee	Ramsey P. Locke	5066
Tennessee	Kenneth N. Van Hook	5669
Texas	Salvador Guerrero	4372
Texas	Edward J. Krenek	8787
Texas	N F. Layne	3990
Texas	Earnest G. Mudd	8541
Texas	Duane G. Shriver	8919
Texas	Alexander Vernon	9191
Texas	Ferrell E. Warden	8552
Utah	Norman I. Nelson	1695
Utah	Glenn E. Silvis	2379
Vermont	Ronald K. Browe	7823
Vermont	Thomas J. Keyes	6471
Vermont	Frederick F. Ladue	792
Vermont	James H. Lane	6689
Vermont	John J. Zuba	1034
Virginia	Paul T. Moore	4491
Virginia	Charles B. Wilkerson	9808
Washington	Robert H. Berleen	9430
Washington	Donald E. Bracken	2289
Washington	Andrew J. Martin	10018
Washington	Charles E. Vitiritti, Jr.	9430
West Virginia	Conrad H. Bennett	5578
West Virginia	Melvin L. Reed	573
West Virginia	Wesley J. Thomas	573
Wisconsin	Matthias Mayer, Jr.	6498
Wisconsin	Edward F. Stockel	7896

Wisconsin	Curtis J. Taylor, Jr.	1318
Wyoming	William H. Saunders	579

COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Chairman: Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, Past Commander-in-Chief, Arizona

Vice Chairman: Paul S. Aaberg, Post 6139, North Dakota

(Room 1205, H. Roe Bartle Convention Center)

SUBCOMMITTEE ON POW/MIA

Chairman: Billy Ray Cameron, Past Commander-in-Chief, North Carolina

Vice Chairman: Peter Stack, Post 4344, Texas

Alabama	Robert G. Bassett	924
Alabama	Alton S. Jones	5797
Alabama	Harold C. Robertson	3492
Alabama	Gordon R. Shewmake	3016
Alaska	Kenneth Cramer	9785
Alaska	John M. Schwulst	9365
Arizona	James R. Currieo	9972
Arizona	Allen F. Kent	9972
Arizona	Gregory Kozakiewicz	9907
Arizona	William J. Silva	836
Arkansas	Grady L. Brown	4548
Arkansas	Henry M. Hemingway	2242
California	John L. Fitzke	9241
California	Kenneth M. Murray	2075
California	Oren D. Robinson	85
California	Harry H. Shishido	9938
California	Harry H. Tanabe	9879
California	John M. Warner	4851
Colorado	John M. Loring, Jr.	9221
Colorado	Victor D. Madonna	2601
Connecticut	Francis C. Brought	10201
Connecticut	Mike L. Montecalvo	6933
Connecticut	Robert P. Tozzoli	9929
Connecticut	Thomas C. Walker	5849
Delaware	Clinton A. Slack	475
Dist. of Col.	Philip L. Anderson	284
Dist. of Col.	Chester L. Ross	2460
Europe	Richard F. Kennedy	9534
Europe	Ronnie A. Wright	10775
Florida	James W. Carlisle	10097

Florida	Thomas Koulan	10209
Florida	Eugene R. Manfrey	6827
Florida	Elijah L. Summerfield	6180
Florida	John Uhrich, Jr.	10068
Georgia	Richard Branson	5080
Georgia	Dan Bullard, III.	658
Georgia	Albert R. Spears	6330
Idaho	Alvin R. Mason	63
Idaho	Randall E. Russell	2136
Idaho	Glenn J. Scott	2146
Illinois	Edward F. Jarnell, Jr.	8081
Illinois	Lee E. Mathias	7446
Illinois	Leonard L. Messerli	5694
Illinois	Russell R. Rieke	5694
Indiana	James M. Leavitt	5782
Indiana	Henry F. Mullins, Jr.	5312
Indiana	George A. Thompson	286
Iowa	Robert M. Capron	839
Iowa	Lloyd G. Peters	839
Iowa	Leslie G. Portwood	817
Iowa	Lee L. Shatto	3159
Kansas	Randall M. Meyer	1141
Kansas	George A. Papps	5901
Kansas	Roy E. Shedd, Jr.	846
Kansas	Joseph Wahrman	1133
Kentucky	William R. Coffey	5710
Kentucky	Michael N. Wiechman	6423
Latin Amer/Carib	Aurora G. Toth	3835
Louisiana	Cyril Burkett	1736
Louisiana	William M. Procter	1736
Maine	Timothy P. Getz	3335
Maine	Zane A. Grant	2599
Maine	Joseph C. Rump	4917
Maryland	Nicholas T. Bassetti	9083
Massachusetts	Walter G. Gansenberg	834
Massachusetts	Eugene F. Hakala	1812
Massachusetts	John F. Leonard	639
Massachusetts	Ronald A. Patalano	529
Massachusetts	John J. Robarge	2425
Michigan	Assad Allie	147
Michigan	James N. Goldsmith	4139
Michigan	John J. Harrow, Jr.	3724
Michigan	Richard E. La Fave	5670
Michigan	John H. Lewis	6165
Michigan	David R. Meyers	4090
Michigan	James L. Warner	1888

Minnesota	Calvin G. Abers	7902
Minnesota	Merlin O. Hanson	1639
Minnesota	Donald E. Heuer	9433
Minnesota	Gordon W. Kirk	8854
Mississippi	Willie L. Lindsey	9832
Mississippi	Bernard Mc Clelland	2618
Mississippi	Otis Washington	9832
Missouri	Charles F. Hemenway	9638
Missouri	Richard K. Kelley	5606
Missouri	George D. Newell	2866
Montana	Claude J. Mc Carty	1087
Montana	Donald A. Staves	1507
Nebraska	Billy C. Smith	7028
Nebraska	Dwaine D. Wilson	1652
Nebraska	Dale F. Wittrock	10579
Nevada	George Dennis	8250
Nevada	Frank R. Risewick	10047
New Hampshire	Paul J. Chevalier	168
New Hampshire	Billy J. Floyd	1631
New Hampshire	Robert W. Madigan	483
New Hampshire	Ernest A. Tucker	1698
New Jersey	Robert K. Bischoff	9691
New Jersey	James M. Campbell	2226
New Jersey	William A. Goode	809
New Jersey	Walter F. Merklin	5698
New Jersey	George T. Van Allen	7504
New Mexico	Manuel G. Evaro	4384
New Mexico	James L. Kimery	9354
New Mexico	Larry R. Powell	2182
New York	Jeffrey R. Addison	1418
New York	Robert E. Barnhart	686
New York	Samuel C. Pilato	307
New York	Karl R. Rohde	1374
New York	Roy Spanower	5558
North Carolina	Michael W. Ayscue	2417
North Carolina	Frank P. Durbino	9133
North Carolina	Homer G. Edwards	4309
North Carolina	William J. Hendren	2031
North Dakota	Paul S. Aaberg	6139
North Dakota	Wallace B. Bolte	1326
Ohio	John E. Keirns	7174
Ohio	Paul A. Lucas	7174
Ohio	John E. Moon	2873
Ohio	Craig D. Swartz	2947
Ohio	Barry M. Walker	4579
Oklahoma	Billie D. Mc Gill	1327

Oklahoma	Robert K. Mc Gill	4876
Oklahoma	Mark C. Richardson	4876
Oregon	Johnnie A. Baugh	1383
Oregon	Charles D. Fuller	966
Pacific Areas	Leon R. Vileo	9951
Pennsylvania	William C. Allen	7213
Pennsylvania	John A. Biedrzycki	418
Pennsylvania	Russell R. Canevari	5544
Pennsylvania	Anthony J. Longo	5205
Pennsylvania	Charles R. Mc Cormick	1810
Pennsylvania	Norman F. Rettig, Jr.	249
Rhode Island	Frank E. Lightowler	6342
Rhode Island	Robert J. Rocheleau	1271
South Carolina	Richard N. Bell	4262
South Carolina	William J. Jolin	6087
South Dakota	James E. Fortin	750
South Dakota	Wallace R. Robidou	5969
South Dakota	Lorne F. Ruzicka	3312
Tennessee	Kendall S. Ickes, Jr.	7175
Tennessee	Otha M Jack Kerr	5266
Tennessee	Carl G. Minnick	1289
Texas	Leonardo Barraza	9173
Texas	Keith T. Brown	10454
Texas	Martin H. Lambrecht	2059
Texas	Ezra H. Meeks	2012
Texas	Manuel O. Rivas	8782
Texas	Richard W. Shivers	7873
Utah	Daniel P. Crossley	3586
Utah	James C. Mc Kee	409
Vermont	Robert C. Burroughs	10037
Vermont	Wayne R. Camley	9653
Vermont	Philip A. Harnois	6674
Virginia	Otis N. Berry	637
Virginia	Bruce R. Harder	1503
Virginia	John E. Saunders	4809
Virginia	Clifford Williford	3160
Washington	Miles S. Irvine	379
Washington	Charles A. Noble	3386
Washington	George F. Riedel, Jr.	969
Washington	Eric G. Sandstrom	969
West Virginia	Ernest E. Imboden	9926
West Virginia	Paul E. Nealis	1101
Wisconsin	Walter G. Hogan	6498
Wisconsin	Allen W. Kochenderfer	10406
Wisconsin	Eric E. Mortensen	1391
Wisconsin	George Pfielsticker	305

Wisconsin	Debra L. Walker	1904
Wyoming	Gaylord C. Fosdick	11453

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

Chairman: Paul A. Spera, Past Commander-in-Chief, Massachusetts

Vice Chairman: R.D. Smith, Jr., Past Commander-in-Chief, Georgia

(Room 2210A, H. Roe Bartle Convention Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Johnny E. Boyington	3568
Alabama	Lester E. Kapelka	5850
Alabama	Telfair J. Mashburn	3568
Alaska	Horace D. Johnson	9978
Alaska	Gary L. Kurpius	10221
Alaska	Kenneth P. Pleasants	10029
Arizona	John M. Jackson	3632
Arizona	Robert J. Rankin	9399
Arkansas	William W. Beams, Sr.	4546
Arkansas	James L. Miller	4548
California	James D. Duff	8737
California	Samuel E. Gladden	3868
California	Robert S. Hockenhull	2337
California	Willie Mc Cray, Jr.	67
California	Cornelius P. O Connor	2967
California	Raymond C. Sisk	9791
Colorado	Eugene G. Doubek	9644
Colorado	George H. Palmateer	4171
Colorado	Ernesto A. Roybal	899
Connecticut	Andrew F. Flanagan	10219
Connecticut	Glenn N. Tewksbury	10362
Delaware	William W. Wailes	475
Europe	George M. Hunter, Jr.	10557
Europe	Bruce A. Withers	11058
Florida	James De Pass	10068
Florida	Paul Y. Goldych	4256
Florida	Kenneth A. Thie	9272
Georgia	Robert K. Nelson	3200
Georgia	James D. Randles	5257
Georgia	R D. Smith, Jr.	4346
Hawaii	Louis Balasanos	10276
Hawaii	Norbert K. Enos	2875
Idaho	Gray I. Clawson	3012
Idaho	Mel W. Stokes	63
Illinois	Fred J. Albers	5790

Illinois	George R. Cramer	6869
Illinois	Harry P. Feazel	2055
Illinois	Donald L. Porter	454
Illinois	Edward A. Trennert	2255
Indiana	Mark D. Acker	1114
Indiana	Darrel W. Cavin	1130
Indiana	Paul D. Curtice	1257
Indiana	John L. Dahman	1421
Iowa	Muriel E. Allan	3633
Iowa	Daryl R. Shinker	2349
Kansas	Michael F. Cavanaugh	7253
Kansas	Robert L. Domnick	11449
Kansas	Leroy J. Niebaum	7348
Kansas	Edward E. Prouty	3544
Kansas	Norman G. Staab	6240
Kentucky	Michael R. Allen	10281
Kentucky	Thomas I. Blain	5421
Kentucky	Robert S. Burkholder	1170
Latin Amer/Carib	Thomas D. Graham	6565
Latin Amer/Carib	Walter F. Griggs	3835
Louisiana	Richard J. Fruge	5153
Louisiana	Alva Nash	4586
Louisiana	Larry W. Rivers	1736
Maine	Peter F. Miesburger	9389
Maine	James M. Sawyer	6859
Maine	Robert H. Turcotte	887
Maryland	Franklin A. Burchill	521
Massachusetts	Joseph E. Caouette	1105
Massachusetts	Theodore R. Eaton	2104
Massachusetts	Edward W. Parks	2188
Massachusetts	Paul A. Spera	144
Massachusetts	John T. Tynan	561
Michigan	Dale J. Brubaker	3941
Michigan	Theodore Hetherington	2358
Michigan	Richard E. Kummerow	4063
Minnesota	Donald L. Gates, Jr.	141
Minnesota	Harold Genrich	1222
Minnesota	Thomas L. Hanson	1639
Minnesota	Lyle B. Horner, Sr.	494
Minnesota	Alcuin G. Loehr	4847
Minnesota	Ted B. Theodorsen	6320
Mississippi	Bobby Miller	4490
Mississippi	Dwight M. Tatum	4100
Missouri	John B. Mc Ghee	4107
Missouri	Marion G. Meier	5553
Montana	Charles Barbero	1595

Montana	Wade S. Smith	3831
Nebraska	John L. Caricaburu	131
Nebraska	Anthony J. Gallardo	131
Nebraska	Gerald L. Ludwig	7998
Nebraska	Arnold L. Miller	2280
Nevada	Walter J. Dybeck, Jr.	10047
Nevada	Ray V. Rehfeldt	7385
New Hampshire	Jerry A. Parenti	8546
New Hampshire	Melvin Robert, Jr.	1698
New Hampshire	Richard F. Therrien	8214
New Jersey	Henry J. Adams, Jr.	3525
New Jersey	Richard M. Booth	7677
New Jersey	Vincent Brinkerhoff	335
New Jersey	Joseph T. Del Grippo	335
New Jersey	Charles A. Duffett, Jr.	62
New Mexico	Lawrence W. Castleman	401
New Mexico	Frederico Juarbe, Jr.	401
New Mexico	Timothy C. Watts	10124
New York	Andrew J. Czeck	9591
New York	Jack L. Haight, Jr.	6778
New York	William E. Mc Garr	6196
New York	George S. Smith	53
North Carolina	Johnie M. Dyson	9881
North Carolina	Steve M. Jones	9337
North Carolina	A G. Parker	8719
Ohio	Robert C. Cockrell	1082
Ohio	Harry D. English	5108
Ohio	John W. Ford	1042
Ohio	Frank Hofstetter, Jr.	2947
Ohio	Joseph P. Seibert	6428
Oklahoma	Donald D. Daniel	3608
Oklahoma	Eugene H. George	9969
Oklahoma	Alfred D. Mills	3916
Oklahoma	James L. Williamson	7192
Oregon	Tony J. Sammons	9745
Pennsylvania	Benjamin Bowers	1690
Pennsylvania	Carmen A. De Santi	2198
Pennsylvania	Cecil K. Dennis	5958
Pennsylvania	Emery C. Graham	974
Pennsylvania	Peter Krenitsky	6082
Pennsylvania	Almon J. Long	283
Pennsylvania	Patricia S. Potter	5424
Rhode Island	Armondo C. Azzinaro	8955
Rhode Island	Richmond J. Stewart	306
South Carolina	Richard L. Mayhew	641
South Carolina	Louis A. Thornton	4262

South Dakota	Daryl L. Halling	3164
South Dakota	John E. Miller	628
South Dakota	Leroy R. Pawlowski	5860
South Dakota	Duane E. Starkey	2969
Tennessee	John Furgess	1970
Tennessee	James F. Johnson	11333
Tennessee	Kenneth R. Perkins	8778
Texas	Carrol W. Carnley	2494
Texas	Robert L. Doumecq	3359
Texas	John W. Glover	3359
Texas	Benito C. Sanchez	10462
Utah	Lorraine J. Robinson	4355
Utah	Boyd W. Winterton	4355
Vermont	Samuel R. Haskins	1034
Vermont	George E. Mayotte	1034
Virginia	Early R. Chappell	1115
Virginia	Dennis M. Cullinan	7916
Virginia	Joseph O. Longstreet	3219
Virginia	James Rodriques	3160
Virginia	Francis W. Stover	9274
Washington	George C. Berthiaume	969
Washington	Edwin F. Rasmussen	9430
Washington	Ricardo E. Wilson	9430
West Virginia	Ralph W. Honaker	1064
West Virginia	Robert B. Kesling	573
West Virginia	Scottie E. King	1064
Wisconsin	Frank L. Capps, Jr.	2336
Wisconsin	Michael L. Furgal	2312
Wisconsin	Jerome J. Wenninger	9156
Wyoming	Robert L. Craft, Jr.	11453
Wyoming	A. L. Ellefson	8473

COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

Chairman: Richard Trombla, Post 1174, Kansas

COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

Chairman: Cooper T. Holt, Past Commander-in-Chief, Tennessee

Vice Chairman: Wayne J. Thompson, Jr., Post 5061, Colorado

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 06352 862 2

